

91
THE
TRAGEDY
OF
NERO.

Newly written.



LONDON
Printed by Aug. Mathewes, for Thomas Jones,
and are to be sold at his shoppe in Saine
Dunstons Churchyard, in
Fleete-street.
1633.

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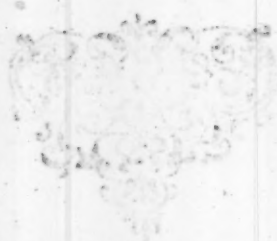
THE

TRAGEDY

OF

NERO

By JOHN DRYDEN



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Printed by C. & J. Stansfeld, at the Press in St. Dunstons Church-yard, in Fleet-Street.
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THE
TRAGEDIE OF
NERO.

Actus Primus.

Enter *Petronius, Arbyter, Antonius, Honoratus.*

Petronius.

TVsh, take the Wench
I showed thee now, or else some other seeke;
What can your choller no way be allay'd?
But with Imperiall titles?
Will you more titles unto *Caesar* give?

Anto. Great are thy fortunes *Nero*, great thy power,
Thy Empire limited with natures bounds;
Vpon thy ground the Sunne doth set, and rise;
The day, and night are thine:
Nor can the Planets wander where they will:
See that proud Earth, that feares not *Caesars* name,
Yet nothing of all this, I envie thee;
But her, to whom the World, unforc't, obayes,
Whose eyes more worth then all it looks upon:
In whom, all beauties Nature hath enclod'd,
That through the wide Earth, or Heaven are dispos'd.

Petro. Indeed she steales and robs each part o'th world,
With borrowed beauties to enflame thine eye;
The Sea, to fetch her Pearle, is diu'd into,
The Diamond rocks are cut, to make her shine:

The Tragedie of Nero.

To plume her pride, the Birds doe naked sing
When my *Enanthe*, in a homely gowne.

Ant. Homely I faith.

Petro. I, homely in her gowne,
But looke upon her face, and that's set out
With no small grace, no vayled shaddowes helpe;
Foole; that hadst rather with false lights and darke
Beguiled be, then see the ware thou buyest?

Poppea royally attended, and passe over the
Stage, in State.

Ant. Great *Queene*, whom nature made to be her glory,
Fortune got eyes, and came to be thy servant,
Honour is proud to be thy title; Though
Thy beauties doe draw up my soule; yet still,
So bright, so glorious is thy Majestie,
That it beates downe againe my climbing thoughts.

Petro. Why true;
And other of thy blindnesses thou seest,
Such one to love thou dar'st not speake unto.
Give me a wench, that will be easily had,
Not wold vvith cost; And, being sent for, comes,
And when I have her folded in mine armes,
Then *Cleopatra* she, or *Lucretis* is:
He give her any title.

Anto. Yet not so much her greatnesse and estate
My hopes dishearten, as her chastitie.

Pet. Chastitie, foole! a vvord not knowne in Courts:
Well may it lodge in meane, and Country homes,
Where pouerty, and labour keeps them downe,
Short sleepes, and hands made hard with *Thyncean* Wooll.
But never comes to great mens Pallaces,
Where ease, and riches, stirring thoughts beget,
Provoking meats, and surfet wines inflame:
Where a'l there setting forth's but to be wold,
And wold they would not bee, but to be wonne.
Will one man serve *Poppea*? Nay thou shalt
Make her, as soone contented with an eye.

Nimph.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Nymphidius to them.

Nim. While *st Nero*, in the streets his Pageants shewes,
I, to his faire wives chamber sent for am.

You gracious Starres that smiled in my birth,
And thou bright starre more powerfull then them all,

Whose favouring smiles have made me what I am,

Thou shalt my God, my Fate, and fortune be,

Exit Nim.

Ans. How sawcely yon fellow.

Enters the Emperresse chamber.

Pet. I, and I er too? *Antonius* knowest thou him?

Ans. What? know the onely favorite of the Court?

Indeed, not many dayes agoe thou mightest

Have not unlawfully asked that question.

Pet. Why? is he rais'd?

Ans. That have I sought in him,

But never piece of good desert could find:

He is *Nymphidia's* sonne, the free'd woman,

Which basenesse to shake off, he nothing hath

But his owne pride.

Pet. You remember, when *Gallus*, *Cassius*,
And others too, though now forgotten, were
Great in *Poppaeus* eyes.

Ans. I doe, and did enterpret it in them:

An honourable favour, she bare vertue,

Or parts like vertue.

Pet. The cause is one of theirs, and this mans grace,

I once was great in wavering smiles of Court,

I fell because I knew: Since have I given

My time to my owne pleasures, and would now

Advise thee too, to meane and safe delights:

The thigh's as soft the sheepes backe covereth,

As that with crimson, and with gold adorn'd:

Yet cause I see, that thy restrain'd desires,

Cannot their owne way chuse, come thou with me,

Perhaps Ile shew thee meanes of remedie.

Exeunt.

Two

The Tragedie of Nero.

Two *Romans* at severall doores,

1. *Rom.* Whither so fast man? whither so fast?

2. *Rom.* Whither? but where your eares doe lead you;
To *Nero's* Triumphs, and the shouts you heare.

1. *Rom.* Why? comes he crown'd with *Parthian* ouerthrow,
And brings he *Vologasus* with him chain'd?

2. *Rom.* *Parthian* overthrow? why, he comes crown'd
For Victories which never Roman wonne;
For having *Greece* in her owne arts overthrowne;
In Singing, Dancing, Horse-race, Stage-playing.
Never, O *Rome* had never such a Prince.

1. *Rom.* Yet I have heard: our ancestors were crown'd
For other Victories,

2. *Rom.* None of our ancestors, were ere like him. *Within*
Nero, Apollo, Nero, Hercules!

1. *Rom.* Hearke, how th'applauding shouts do cleare th'ayre,
This Idle talke will make me loose the fight.

Two *Romans* more to them.

3. *Rom.* Whither goe you? alls done i'th Capitall,
And *Nero*, having there his tables hung,
And garlands up, is to the Pallace gone.

'Twas beyond wonder; I shall never see,
Nay, I never looke to see the like againe,
Eighteene hundred and eight Crownes
For severall victories and the place set downe
Where, and in what, and whom he overcame.

4. *Rom.* That was set downe i'th tables, that were borne
Vpon the Souldiers speares.

1. *Rom.* O made, and sometimes vs'd to other ends!

3. *Rom.* But did he winne them all with singing?

3. *Rom.* Faith all with singing, and with Rage-playing.

1. *Rom.* So many Crownes got with a song!

4. *Rom.* But, did you marke the Greeke Musicians
Behind his Charior, hanging downe their heads?

Sham'd

The Tragedie of Nero.

Sham'd, and overcome in their professions,

O Rome was never honour'd so before.

3. Rom. But, what was he that rode ith' Chariot with him?

4. Rom. That was *Diodorus* the Minstrell, that he favours.

3. Rom. Was there ever such a Prince?

2. Rom. O *Nero Augustus*, the true *Augustus*.

3. Rom. Nay, had you seene him as he rode along,
With an *Olympicke* Crowne upon his head,
And with a *Puthian* on his arme; you would have thought,
Looking on one, he had *Apollo* seem'd,
On th' other *Hercules*.

2. Rom. I have heard my father oft repeat the Triumphs,
Which in *Augustus Caesars* times were showne,
Vpon his Victorie ore the *Illirians*;
But it seemes it was not like to this.

3. & 4. Rom. Push, it could not be like this.

2. 3. & 4. O *Nero, Apollo, Nero, Hercules*.

Exeunt. 2. 3. & 4. Rom.

Manet Primus.

1. Rom. Whether *Augustus* Triumph greater was
I cannot tell; his Triumphs cause I know
Was greater farre, and farre more honourable.
What are we People? or our flattering voices,
That alwayes shame, and foolish things applaud
Having no sparke of soule; All eares and eyes,
Pleas'd with vaine shewes, deluded by our senses,
Still enemies to wisdom, and to goodnesse.

exit.

Enter *Nero, Poppea, Nymphidius, Tigellinus, Epapro-*
dus, Neophytus, and others.

Nero. Now faire *Poppea*, see thy *Nero* shine
In bright *Achaius* spoyle, and *Rome* in him.
The *Capitol* hath other Trophies seene
Then it was wont; Not spoyle with blood bedu'd,
Or the unhappy obsequies of Death:
But such is *Caesars* cunning, not his force,
Hath wrung from *Greece*; too bragging of her art.

Tigell. And in this strife, the glories all your owne,
Your Tribunes cannot share this praise with you;

B

Here,

The Tragedie of Nero.

Here your *Centurions* have no part at all,
Bootlesse your Armies, and your Eagles were ;
No Navies helpe, to bring away this conquest.

Nim. Even Fortunes selfe, Fortune the Queene of Kingdoms
(That Wars grim valour graceth with her deeds,)
Will claime no portion in this Victory.

Nero. Not *Bacchus*, drawne from Nisa downe with Tigers,
Curbing with viny raines, their vvilfull heads,
Whil'st some doe gape upon his lay Thirfe,
Some, on the dangling grapes, that Crowne his head,
All prayse his beautie, and continuing youth ;
So strooke, amazed India with wonder
As *Neroes* glories did the Greekish Townes
Eli and *Pisa*, and the rich *Micena*,
Iunonian Argos, and yet *Corinth* proud
Of her two Seas ; all which ore-come, did yeeld
To me their praise, and prizes of their games.

Poppa. Yet, in your Greekish journey, we doe heare
Sparta, and *Athens*, the two eyes of *Greece*
Neither beheld your person, nor your skill ;
Whether, because they did afford no games,
Or for their too much gravitie.

Nero. Why ? what
Should I have scene in them ? but in the one,
Hunger, blacke pottage, and men hot to die,
Thereby to rid themselves of misery :
And what in th' other ? but short Capes, long Beards,
Much wrangling, in things needlesse to be knowne,
Wisedome in words, and only austere faces.
I vwill not be *Aicclaus*, nor *Solen*.

Nero was there, where he might honour vvinne,
And honour hath he won, and brought from *Greece*,
Those spoiles which never Roman could obtaine,
Spoyles won by wit, and *Trophies* of his skill.

Nim. What a thing he makes it to be a Minstrel .

Pop. I prayse your wit, my Lord, that chose such safe
Honors, safe spoyles, won without dust or blood.

Nero. What mocke ye me *Poppa* ?

Poppa.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Poppea. Nay, in good faith my Lord, I speake in earnest,
I hate that hee die, and adventurons crew,
That goe to loose their owne, to purchase, but
The breath of others, and the common voyce,
Them that will lose their hearing for a sound ;
That by death onely, seeke to get a living,
Make skarres their beauty, and count losse of Limmes
The commendation of a proper man,
And so, goe halting to immortalitie :
Such fooles I love worse then they doe their lives.

Nero. But now *Poppea* having layd apart
Our boastfull spoyles, and ornaments of Triumph,
Come we like *Ione* from *Phlegra*——

Poppea. O Gyant-like comparifon.

Nero. When after all his Fiers and wandring darts,
He comes to bath himselfe in *Innos* Eyes :
But thou, (then wrangling *Inno*) farre more faire,
Staying the evening beautie of the Skie,
Or the dayes brightnesse ; shalt make glad thy *Caesar*,
Shalt make him proud such beauties to Inioy :

Exeunt.

Manet Nymphidius solus.

Nymph. Such beauties to inioy, were happinesse,
And a reward sufficient in it selfe,
Although no other end, or hopes were aim'd at :
But I have other ; Tis not *Poppeas* armes,
Nor the short pleasures of a wanton bed,
That can extinguish mine aspiring thirst :
To *Neroes* Crowne ; by her love I must climbe,
Her bed is but a step unto his Throne ;
Already, wise men laugh at him, and hate him ;
The people, though his Minstrelsie doth please them
They feare his Crueltie, hate his exactions,
Which, his need, still, must force him to encrease.
The multitude, which cannot one thing long
Like, or dislike, being cloy'd with vanitie,
Will hate their owne delights, though Wisedome doe not,
Even wearinesse, at length, will give them eyes,

B 2

Thus

The Tragedie of Nero.

Thus I by *Neroes* and *Poppes* favour,
Rais'd to the envious height of second place,
May gaine the first: Hate must strike *Nero* downe,
Love make *Nimphidius* way unto a Crowne. *Exit,*

Enter Seneca, Sceninius, Lucan, and Flaminus.

Scen. His first beginning was his fathers death,
His brothers poysoning, and wives bloody end
Came next, his mothers murder clos'd up all:
x Yet hitherto he was but wicked, when
The guilt of greater evils,ooke away the shame
Of lesser, and did headlong thrust him forth,
To be the scorne, and laughter to the World;
Then first an Emperour came upon the Stage,
And sung to please *Carmen*, and *Candle-sellers*,
And learnt to act, to dance, to be a *Fencer*,
And in despight o' th *Majestie* of *Princes*,
He fell to wrastling, and was soyl'd with dust,
And tumbled on the Earth with servile hands.

Seneca. He sometimes trayned was in better studies,
And had a Child-hood promis'd other hopes;
High fortunes, like strong winds do trie their vessels.
Was not the Race, and Theater bigge enough,
To have inclos'd thy follies here at home?
O could not *Rome* and *Italie* containe
Thy shame? but thou must crosse the Seas to shew it?

Scen. And make them that had wont to see our *Consuls*,
With conquering Eagles waving in the field;
Instead of that, behold an Emperor dancing,
Playing oth' stage, and what else, but to name
Were infamie.

Lucan. O *Mummius*, O *Flaminius*;
x You, whom your Vertues have not made more famous
Then *Neroes* vices; You went ore to Greece,
But t' other vvarres, and brought home other conquests.
You *Corinth*, and *Micene* overthrow;
And *Perseus* selfe, the great *Achilles* race
Orcame; having *Minervas* stayned Temples.

And

The Tragedie of Nero.

And your slaine ancestors of Troy reveng'd.

Senec. They stroue with Kings, and kinglike aduersaries,
Were even in their enemies made happie ;
The Macedonian Courage tryed of old,
And the new greatnesse of the *Syrian* power :
But he for *Philip*, and *Antiochus*,
Hath found more easie enemies to deale with,
Turpinus, *Pammenes*, and a rout of Fidlers.

Sceniv. Why all the begging Mynstrills by the way,
He tooke along with him, and forc'd to strive
That he might overcome imagining
Himselfe immortall by such victories.

Flavi. The men he carried over were enough
T'have put the *Parthian* to his second flight
Or the proud Indian, taught the Roman yoke.

Sceniv. But they were *Neroes* men, like *Nero* arm'd
With Lutes, and Harps, and Pipes, and Fiddle-casts ;
Souldiers to 'th shadow train'd, and not the field. (worthy.

Flavi. Therefore they brought spoyles of such Souldiers

Lucan. But to throw downe the walles and gates of Rome,
To make an entrance for an Hobby-horse ;
To vaunt to 'th people his ridiculous spoyles ;
To come with Lawrell, and with Olives crown'd,
For having beene the worst of all the Singers,
Is beyond Patience.

Sceniv. I and anger too,
Had you but seene him in his Chariot ride.
That Chariot in which *Augustus* late
His Triumphs ore so many Nations shew'd,
And with him in the same a Mynstrell plac'd,
The whilst the people running by his side,
Haile thou *Olympicke Conquerour* did cry,
O haile thou *Pishian*, and did fill the skie
With shame, and voices, Heaven would not have heard:

Senec. I saw't, but turn'd away my Eyes, and Eares,
Angry, they should be privie to such fights.
Why doe I stand relating of the story,
Which in the doing had enough to grieve me ?

The Tragedie of Nero.

Tell on, and end the tale, you, whom it pleaseth ;
Mee mine owne sorrow stops from further speaking,
Nero, my love doth make thy fault, and my griefe greater.

Scenius. I doe commend in *Seneca* this passion ; (ex. Sen.)
And yet me thinkes our Countries miserie,
Doth at our hands crave somewhat more then teares,

Luca, Pittie, thought doth a kind affection shew,
(If it end there) our weakenesse makes us know.

Flavi, Let children weepe, and men seeke remedie.

Scenius. Stoutly, and like a Souldier, *Flavius* :

Yet to seeke remedie to a Princes ill,

Seldome, but it doth the Phisitian kill.

Flavi. And if it doe *Scenius*, it shall take

But a devoted soule from *Flavius*,

Which, to my Country, and the Gods of *Rome*,

Already sacred is, and given away,

Death is no stranger unto me, I haue

The doubtfull hizard in twelue battailes throwne,

My chance was life.

Luca. Why doe we goe to fight in Britanie?

And end our lives under another Sunne?

Seeke causelesse dangers out? the German might

Enioy his Woods, and his owne Allis drinke,

Yet we vvalke safely in the streets of *Rome* :

Bodinea hinders not, but we might live,

Whom, we doe hurt ; Them we call enemies,

And those our Lords that spoyle, and murder us.

Scenius. Nothing is hard to them that dare to die.

This Noble resolution in you Lords,

Heartens me to disclose some thoughts that I—

The matter is of waight and dangerous.

Luca. I see you feare us *Scenius*.

Scenius. Nay, nay, although the thing be full of feare.

Flavi. Tell it to faithfull Eares, what ere it bee.

Scenius. Faith let it goe, it will but trouble us,

Bee hurtfull to the speaker, and the bearer.

Luca. If our long friendship, or the opinion.

Scenius. Why should I feare to tell them?

Why

The Tragedie of Nero.

Why is he not a Parricide, a Player ?

Nay *Lucan* is he not thine Enemy ?

Hate not the Heavens, as well, as men, to see

That condemn'd head : and you O righteous Gods

Whither so ere you now are fled, and will

No more looke downe upon th'oppressed Earth ;

O severe anger of the highest Gods,

And thou sterne power, to whom the Greeks assigne

Scourges, and swords to punish proud mens wrongs,

If you be more then names found out to awe us,

And that wee doe not vainely build you altars,

Aid that just arme, that's bent to execute

What you should doe.

Lucan. Stay, y'are carried too much avway *Scenius*.

Sceni. Why, what will you say for him ? hath he not
Sought to suppress your Poem, to bereave

That honour every tongue in duty paid it.

Nay, what can you say for him, hath he not

Brought his owne wiues (a chaste wives) breast, and torne

With *Scythian* hands his Mothers bowels up,

The Inhospitable *Caucasus* is milde :

The More, that, in the boyling desert, seeks

With blood of strangers to imbrue his jawes

Vpbraides the Roman, now with barbarousnesse.

Lucan. You are too earnest,

I neither can, nor will I speake for him :

And, though he sought my learned paynes to wrong,

I hate him not for that, My verse shall live

When *Neroes* body shall be throwne in Tiber,

And times to come shall blesse those wicked armes ;

I love th'unnaturall wounds, from whence did flow

Another *Cirra*, a new *Helicon*.

I hate him that he is *Romes* enemie,

An enemie to vertue ; sits on high

To shame the seate ; And in that hate my life,

And blood, Ile mingle on the earth with yours.

Flavi. My deeds *Scenius* shall speake my consent.

Sceni. Tis answerd, as I lookt for, Noble Poet,

Worthy

The Tragedie of Nero.

Worthy the double Lawrell; *Flavius*,
Good lucke I see, doth vertuous meanings ayde,
And therefore have the Heavens forborne their duties,
To grace our swords with glorious blood of Tyrants.

Exeunt.

Finitus Actus Primi.

Enter Petronius Solus.

Actus Secundus.

Enter Petronius Solus.

Here waites *Poppea* her *Nymphidius* comming,
And hath this garden, and these walles chose out,
To blesse her with more pleasures then their owne:
Not onely Arras hangings, and silke beds
Are guilty of the faults we blame them for
Somewhat these Arbors, and you trees do know,
Whil'st your kind shades, you to these night sports show.
Night sports? Faith, they are done in open day,
And the Sunne see'th, and cavieth their play.
Hither have I Love-sicke *Antonius* brought,
And thrust him on occasion so long fought:
Shewed him the Emperresse in a thicket by,
Her loves approach waiting with greedie eye;
And told him, if he ever meant to prone,
The doubtfull issue of his hopelesse Love;
This is the place, and time wherein to try it,
Women will heare the suite, that will deny it.
The suite's not hard, that she comes for to take;
Who (hot in lust of men) doth difference make?
At last, loath, willing, to her did he pae;
Arme him *Priapus*, with thy powerfull Mace.
But see, they comming are; how they agree
Here will I hearken, throuvd me gentle tree.

Enter Poppea and Antonius.

X *Anto.* Secke not to grieve that heart which is thins owne.

In:

The Tragedie of Nero.

In Loves sweete fires, let heate of rage burne out ;
These browes could neuer yet to wrinkle learne,
Nor anger out of such faire eyes proceed.

Poppea. You may sollicite your presumptuous suits ;
You dutie may, and shame too layd aside,
Disturbe my privacies, and I forsooth,
Must be afeard even to be angry at you.

Anto. What shame is't to be mastred by such beauty ?
Who, but to serve you, comes, how wants he dutie ?
Or if it be a shame, the shame is yours ;
The fault is onely in your eyes, they drew me ;
Cause you were lovely, therefore did I love :
O, if to love you, anger you so much,
You should not haue such cheekes, nor lips to touch,
You should not have your snow, nor curllall spi'd :
If you but looke on us, in vaine you chide,
We must not see your face, nor heare your speech :
Now, whilst you Love forbid, you Love doe teach.

Pet. He doth better then I thought he would.

Pop. I will not learne my beauties worth of you,
I know you neither are the first nor greatest
Whom it hath mov'd : He whom the World obayes
Is fear'd with anger of my threatning Eys.
It is for you as farre off to adore it,
And not to reach at it with sawtie hands.
Feare, is the Love that's due to Gods and Princes.

Pet. All this is but to edge his appetite.

Ant. O doe not see thy faire in that false glasse
Of outward difference ; Looke into my heart,
There, shalt thou see thy selfe, Inthroned set
In greater Majestie, then all the Pompe
Of *Rome*, or *Nero* ; Tis not the crowching awe,
And Ceremony, with which we flatter Princes,
That can to Loves true duties be compar'd.

Pop. Sir, let me goe, or Ile make knowne your Loue
To them, that shall requite it, but with hate.

Pet. On, on, thou hast the goale, the fort is beaten,
Women are won when they begin to threaten,

C

Ant.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Ans. Your Noblenesse doth warrant me for that,
Nor need you others helpe to punish me,
Who by your forehead am condem'd or free.
They, that to be reveng'd do bend their mind,
Seeke alwayes recompence, in that same kind
The wrong was done them; Love was mine offence,
In that revenge, in that seeke recompence.

Popp. Further to answere, will still cause replies,
And those as ill doe please me, as your selfe:
If you'le an answere take, that's brieve and true,
I hate my selfe, if I be lov'd of you.

exit Popp.

Petro. What gone? but she will come againe sure, no;
It passeth cleane my cunning, all my rules;
For Womens vvantonnesse there is no rule,
To take her in the itching of her Lust,
A proper yong man putting foorth himselfe?
Why Fate; There's Fate and hidden providence
In codpiece matters.

Ans. O unhappie Man,
What comfort have I now *Petronius*?

Pet. Counsell your selfe, Ile teach no more but learne.

Ans. This comfort yet; he shall not so escape,
Who causeth my disgrace, *Nimphidius*,
Whom had I here.— Well, for my true hearts leue
I see thee hates me; And shall I love one
That hates me; and bestowes what I deserue
Vpon my rivall? no, Farewell *Poppea*,
Farewell *Poppea*, and farewell all Love;
Yet thus much shall it still prevaile in me,
That I will hate *Nimphidius* for thee.

Pet. Farewell to her, to my *Enam* be welcome,
Who, now, will to my burning kisses stoope,
Now, with an easie crueltie denie,
That, which she, rather then the asker, would
Have forced from her, then begins her selfe.
There loves, that list, upon great Ladies set;
x I still will love the Wench that I can get.

Exeunt.

Enter

The Tragedie of Nero.

*Enter Nero, Tigellinus, Epaphroditus
and Neophilus.*

Nero. *Tigellinus*, said the villaine *Proculus*
I was throwne downe in running?

Tigel. My Lord, he said that you were crown'd for that
You could not doe.

Nero. For that I could not doe?
Why, *Elia* saw me do't, and do't with wonder
Of all the Iudges, and the lookers on:
And yet to see, A villaine? could not do't?
Who did it better? I warrant you he said
I from the Charriot fell against my will.

Tigel. He said my Lord, you were throwne out of it,
All crush't, and main'd, and almost bruis'd to death.

Nero. Malicious Rogue, when I fell willingly,
To show of purpose, with what little hurt
Might a good rider beare a forced fall.
How sayest thou? *Tigellinus*, I am sure
Thou hast in driving as much skill as he.

Tigel. My Lord, you greater cunning shew'd in falling,
Then had you fate.

Nero. I know I did; or bruised in my fall?
Hurt? I protest I felt no grieffe in it.

Go *Tigellinus*, fetch the villaines head,
This makes me see his heart in other things?
Fetch me his head, he nere shall speake againe.

Exit Tigel

What doe we Princes differ from the durt,
And basenesse of the common multitude,
If to the scorne of each malicious tongue
We subject are: For that I had no skill;
Not he, that his farre famed daughter set
A prize to Victory, and had bin crown'd
With thirteene Sutors deaths, till he at length
By fate of gods, and servants treasons fell,
(Shoulder eac't *Pelops* glorying in his spoyle,)
Could with more skill his coupled horses guide,
Even as a Barke, that thrrough the moving Flood,

The Tragedie of Nero.

Her linnen wings, and the forc't ayre doe beare,
The Billowes some, she smoothly cuts them through :
So past my burning Axeltree along,
The people follow with their eyes and voice,
And now the wind doth see it selfe outrun,
And the Clouds wonder to be left behind ;
Whilst the voydayre is fill'd with noyse and dynne,
And *Neroes* name doth beate the brassen Skie,
Iupiter envying, loath doth heare my praise :
Then there greene bowes, and Crownes of *Olive* wreath's
The Conquerors prayse, they give me as my due,
And yet this Rogue faith, no, we have no skill.

Enter a servant to them.

Servant. My Lord, the Stage, and all the furniture—

Nero. I have no skill to drive a Chariot :
Had he but robd mee, broke my treasure,
The red Sea's mine, mine are the *Indian* stones,
The Worlds mine owne, then cannot I be robde ?
But spightfully to undermine my fame,
To take away my Art ; he would my life
As well, no doubt ; could he told how.

Enter Tigellinus, with Proculus head.

Neoph. My Lord,
Tigellinus is come with *Proculus* head.

*Strikes
him.*

Nero. O cry thee mercy good *Neophytus* :
Give him five hundred sesterces for amends,
Hast brought him *Tigellinus* ?

Tegil. Heres his head my Lord.

Nero. His tongue had bin enough,

Tegil. I did as you commanded me my Lord.

Nero. Thou toldst me not, though he had such a Nose,
Now are you quiet, and have quiet me ;
This tis to be commander of the World,
Let them extoll weakke pittie that doe need it,
Let men cry to have Law and justice done,
And tell their griefes to Heaven, that heares them not,
Kings must upon the peoples headlesse courtesies
Walke to securitie, and ease of minde.

Why

The Tragedie of Nero.

Why what have we to doe with th'ayrie names
(That old age and *Philosophers* found out,)
Of *Injustice*, and (ne're certaine) *Equitie* ;
The Gods revenge themselves, and so will we :
Where right is (scand, *Authoritie* is overthrowne,
We have a high prerogative above it ;
Slaves may doe what is just, we, what we please,
The people will repine, and thinke it ill,
But they must beare, and prayse too, vvhat we will,

Enter CORNUTUS to them.

Neoph. My Lord, *CORNUTUS* whom you sent for's come.

Nero. Welcome good *CORNUTUS*
Are all things ready for the Stage,
As I gave charge.

Corn. They onely stay your comming.

Nero. *CORNUTUS*, I must act to day *Orestes*.

Corn. You have done that already; and too truly——*aside.*

Nero. And vvhen our Sceane is done, I meane besides
To read some composited of mine owne,
Which for the great opinion I my selfe,
And *Rome* in generall, of my Iudgement, hath,
Before I publish them, Ile shew them thee.

Corn. My Lord, my disabilities——

Nero. I know thy modestie,

Ile only shew thee, now, my works beginning :

Goe see *Epaphroditus*,

Musicke make ready, I vvill sing to day.

Exit Epa.

CORNUTUS I pray thee come neere,

And let me heare thy Iudgement in my paines :

I would have thee more familiar good *CORNUTUS*,

Nero doth prise desert, and more esteemes

Them, that in knowledge second him, then power,

Marke with what stile and state my worke begins.

Corn. Might not my interruption offend,

Whats your workes name my Lord, vvhat writ e you of?

Nero. I meane to write the deedes of all the *Romans*.

Corn. Of all the *Romans* ! a huge argument.

Nero. I have not yet bethought me of a Title

The Tragedie of Nero.

You Enthrall Powers Which the wide Fortunes doome he reads
Of Empire crown'd seven mountains-seated Rome
Fall blowne ; Inspire me with Machilæan rage,
That I may bellow out Romes Prentisage,
As when the Menades doe fill their Drums,
And crooked hornes with Mimalonean hummes,
And Emion doe Ingeminate a round,
Which reparable Ecchoe doe resound.

How dost thou like our Muses paines *Cornutus.*

Cornu. The verses have more in them, then I see ;
Your worke my Lord I doubt will be too long.

Nero. Too long ?

Tigel. Too long ?

Cornu. I, If you write the deedes of all the *Romanes*
How many Bookes thinke you t'include it in ?

Nero. I thinke to write about foure hundred bookes.

Cornu. Foure hundred ? why my Lord they'll nere be read.

Nero. Hah ?

Tigel. Why he, whom you esteeme so much, *Crispian,*
Wrote many more.

Cornu. But they were profitable to common life,
And did Men, Honesty, and Wisedome teach.

Nero. *Tigellinus* ?

Exit Nero & Tigel.

Cornu. See with what earnestnesse he crau'd my judgement,
And now he freely hath it, how it likes him ?

Neoph. The Prince is angry, and his fall is nere ;
Let us be gon, least we partake his ruines.

Exeunt omnes præter Cornu.

Manet Cornutus Solus.

What should I doe at Court ? I cannot lye ;
Why didst thou call me, *Nero*, from my bookes ?
Didst thou for flatterie of *Cornutus* looke ?
No, let those purple Fellowes that stand by thee,
(That admire shew, and things that thou canst give,
Leave to please Truth, and Vertue, to please thee.
Nero, ther's nothing in thy power, *Cornutus*
Doth wish or feare.

Exit

The Tragedie of Nero.

Enter Tigellinus to him.

Tigel. Tis *Nero's* pleasure that you straight depart
To *Giara*, and there remaine confin'd:
Thus he out of his Princely Clemencie,
Hath death, your due, turn'd but to banishment.

Cornu. Why *Tigellinus*?

Tigel. I have done, upon your perill, goe or stay. *exit Ti.*

Cornu. And why should Death? or Banishment be due?
For speaking, that which was requir'd, my thought:
O why doe Princes loue to be deceiu'd?
And, even, doe force abuses on themselves?
Their Eares are so with pleasing speech beguil'd,
That Truth they malice, Flatterie, truth account,
And their owne Soule, and understanding lost,
Goe (what they are) to seeke in other men.
Alas, weake Prince, how hast thou punisht me,
To banish me from thee? O let me goe
And dwell in *Tanrus*, dwell in *Ethiops*,
So that I doe not dwell at *Rome* with thee.
The farther still, I goe from hence, I know,
The farther I leave Shame and Vice behind.
Where can I goe, but I shall see thee, *Sunne*?
And *Heaven* will be as neere me, still, as here.
Can they, so farre, a knowing soule exile,
That her owne roofoe shee see not ore her head?

Exit.

Enter Piso, Sceninus, Lucan, Flavinus.

Piso. Noble Gentlemen, what thanks, what recompence
Shall he give you, that give to him the World;
One life to them, that must so many venture,
And that, the worst of all, is too meane pay;
Yet can I give no more; Take that, bestow it
Vpon your service.

Lucan. O *Piso*, that vouchsafest,
To grace our headlesse partie with thy name;
Whom having our conductor, wee need not
Haue fear'd to goe against the well try'd valour
Of *Inim*, or staydnesse of *Augustus*,
Much lesse the shame and Womanhood of *Nero*;

When

The Tragedie of Nero.

When we had once given out, that our pretence
VVere all for thee, our end to make thee Prince,
They thronging came to give their names, Men, VVomen,
Gentlemen, People, Soldiers, Senators,
The Campe and City, grew asham'd that *Nero*,
And *Piso* should be offered them together.

Scen. We seeke not now (as in the happie dayes
O'th common wealth they did) for libertie;
O you, deare Master, *Cassius* and *Brutus*
That was vvith you intomb'd, there let it rest,
We are contented with the galling yoke,
If they vvil only leaue us necks to beare it:
VVe seeke no longer freedome, we seeke life,
At least, not to be murdered, let us die
On enemies swords; Shall we, whom neither
The *Median* Bow, nor *Macedonian* Speare,
Nor the fierce *Gaul*, nor painted *Briton* could
Subdue, lay downe our necks to Tyrants axe?
VVhy doe we talke of Vertue that obay
VVeakenesse and Vice.

Piso. Have patience good *Sceninus*.

Lucan. VVeakenesse and servile government we hitherto
Obeyed have, vvich, that vve may no longer,
VVe haue our lives, and fortunes novv set up,
And have our cause with *Pisos* credit strengthened.

Flavi. VVhich makes it doubtfull, whether loue to him
Or *Neros* hatred, hath dravvne more unto us.

Piso. I see the good thoughts you have of me, Lords.
Lets now proceed to th' purpose of our meeting,
I pray you take your places.

Lets have some Paper brought

Scenin. Who's within.

Enter Milichus to them.

Mili. My Lord,

Scen. Some Inke and Paper.

Flavi. Who's that *Sceninus*?

Sceni. It is my freed man *Milichus*.

Luca. Is he trustie?

*Exit Mili. & enters
again with Inke
and Paper.*

Scenin.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Scenii. I for as great matters, as we are about.

Piso. And those are great ones.

Luca. I aske not that we meane to need his trust,
Gaine hath great Soveraigntie ore servile minds.

Sceni. O but my benefits have bound him to mee,
I, from a bondman, have his state not onely
Advanc't to freedom, but to wealth and credit.

Piso. *Melichus*, vvait i'th next chamber til we cal. *abcondit* so
The thing determinde on our meeting now,
Is of the meanes, and place, due circumstance,
As to the doing of things 'tis requir'd,
So done it names the action.

Melic. I wonder,
What makes this new resort to haunt our house,
When wonted *Lucius Piso* to come hither?
Or *Lucan*, when so oft, as now of late.

Piso. And since the field, and open shew of armes
Dislike you, and that for the Generall good,
You meane to end all stirres, in end of him:
That, as the ground, must first be thought upon.

Melic. Besides, this comming cannot be for forme,
Or visitation, they goe aside,
And have long conferences by themselves.

Luca. *Piso*, his comming to your house at *Baie*,
To bath, and banquet, will fit meanes afford,
Amidst his cups, to end his hated life,
Let him die drunke, that nere liu'd soberly.

Piso. O bee it farre, that I should staine my Table,
And gods of Hospitalitie with blood;
Let not our cause (now innocent) be soyl'd
With such a blot, nor *Pisoes* name made hatefull.
What place can better fit our action
Then his owne house? that boundlesse envied heape,
Built with the spoyles, and blood of Citizens
That hath taken up the Citie, left no Roome
For *Rome* to stand on; *Romanes* get you gone,
And dwell at *Veia*, If that *Veia* too
This house oreerunne not.

D

LUCAN

The Tragedie of Nero.

Lucan. But 'twill be hard to-doe it in his house,
And harder to escape being done. *Piso.* Not so,
Rufus the Captaine of our Guard's with us,
And diuers other oth' *Pretorian* Band
Already made; many, though unacquainted
With our intents, have had disgrace and wrongs,
Which grieve them still; most will be glad of change,
And even they that lov'd him best, when once
They see him gone, will smile o'th coming times,
Let goe things past, and looke to their owne safetie;
Besides th' astonishment and feare will be
So great, so sodaine, that 'twill hinder them
From doing any thing.

Melb. No private businesse can concerne them all;
Their countenances are troubled, and looke sad,
Doubt and Importance in their face is read.

Lucan. Yet still I thinke it were
Safer t' attempt him private, and alone.

Flavi. But 'twill not carry that opinion with it,
Twill seeme more foule, and come from private malice.
Brutus, and they, to right the common cause,
Did chuse a publike place.

X *Seni.* Our deed is honest, why should it seeke corners?
'Tis for the people done, let them behold it;
Let me have them a witnesse of my truth,
And love to th' Common wealth; The danger's greater,
So is the glory. Why should our pale counsels
Tend whither feare, rather then vertue calls them:
I doe not like these cold considering;
First, let our thoughts looke up to what is honest,
Next, o what's safe; If danger may deterre us;
Nothing thats great, or good shall ere be done;
And, when we first gaue hands upon this deed
To th' commons safety, we our owne gave up.
Let no man venture on a Princes death,
How bad soever, with beliefe to escape;
Despaire must be our hope, fame, or reward.
To make the generall liking to concurre

With

The Tragedie of Nero.

With others, were even to strike him in his shame,
Or (as he thinks) his glorie on the Stage,
And so too truly mak't a Tragedy ;
When all the people cannot chuse but clap
So sweet a close, and 'twill not *Cesar* be
That shall be slaine, a *Romane* Prince :
Twill be *Alemaon*, or blind *Oedipus*.

Meli. And if it be of publique matters 'tis not
Like to be talke, or idle fault finding,
On which the coward onely spends his wisdome :
These are all men of action, and of spirit,
And dare performe what they determine on.

Lucan. What thinke you of *Poppea*, *Tigellinus*,
And the other odious instruments of Court:
Were it not best at once to rid them all?

Sceni. In *Casars* ruine, *Anthony* was spared :
Lets not our cause with needlesse blood distaine,
One only mov'd, the change will not appeare
When too much licence given to the sword,
Though against ill, will make even good men feare :
Besides, things settled, you at please may
By Law, and publique Iudgement have them tride.

Meli. And if it be but talke oth' State, 'tis Treason,
Like it they cannot, that they cannot doe :
If seeke to mend it, and remoue the Prince,
That's highest Treason ; change his Countellors,
That's alteration of the gouernment,
The common cloake that Treasons mu'stied in ;
If laying force aside, to seeke by sute,
And faire petition to have the State reform'd,
That's tutoring of the Prince, and takes a way,
Th' one his person, this his Soveraigntie ;
Barely in private talke to shew dislike
Of what is done, is dangerous ; therefore the action
Mislike you, cause the doer likes you not?
Men are not fit to live ith' state they hate.

Piso. Though we would all have that employment sought,
Yet since your worthy forwardnesse, *Seoninus*,

The Tragedie of Nero.

Prevents us, and so Nobly begs for danger:

Be this the chosen hand to doe the deed,

The fortune of the Empire speed your sword.

Sceni. Vertue, and heaven speed it; O you homeborne

Gods of our country, *Romulus* and *Vesta*,

That *Thuscan Tiber*, and *Romes* towers defends:

Forbid not yet at length a happy end

To former euills; Let this hand revenge

The wronged world; enough we now have suffered. *exennt.*

Mantis Melichus solus.

Meli. Tush, all this long consulting's more then words,

It ends not there; th'au'e some attempt, some plot,

Against the state: well, Ile obserue it farther,

And if I find it, make my profit of it.

Exit.

Finis Actus Secundi.

Actus Tertius.

Enter Poppea solus.

Poppea, I lookt *Nimphidius* would have come ere this,

Makes he no greater hast to our embraces?

Or, doth the easines abate his edge?

Or, seeme we not as faire still as wee did?

Or, is he so with *Nero's* playing wonne,

That he, before *Poppea*, doth preferre it?

Or doth he thinke to have occasion still?

Still, to have time to waite on our stolne meetings?

Enter Nimphidius to her.

Popp. But see his presence now doth end those doubts,

What 'ist *Nimphidius* hath so long detain'd you?

Nimph. Faith Lady, causes strong enough,

High walls, bard doores, and guards of armed men.

Poppe. Were you imprisoned then, as you were going

To the Theater.

Nimph. Not in my going Lady,

But

The Tragedie of Nero.

But, in the Theater, I was imprison'd ;
 For, after he was once upon the Stage,
 The Gates were more severely lockt unto,
 Then at a towne besieg'd ; No man, no cause
 Was currant, no, nor passant ; At other fights
 The strife is onely to get in, but here
 The stirre was all, in getting out againe ;
 Had we not bin kept to it so, I thinke
 T'would nere have bin so tedious, though I know,
 'Twas hard to judge, whether his doing of it
 Were more absurd, then 'twas for time to doe it.
 But when we once were forc'd to be spectators,
 Compel'd to that, which should have bin a pleasure,
 We could no longer beare the wearisomnesse :
 Vo paine so irkesome, as a forc't delight ;
 Some fell downe dead, or seem'd at least to doe so,
 Vnder that colour to be carried forth.
 Then death first pleasur'd men, the shape all feare
 Was put on gladly, some clombe ore the walls,
 And so, by falling caught in earnest that,
 Which th'other did dissemble ; There were women
 (That being not able to intreat the guard
 To let them passe the gates) were brought to bed
 Amid'st the throngs of men, and made *Lucina*
 Blush, to see that unwonted company.

Poppe. If 'twere so straightly kept, how got you forth ?

Nimp. Faith Lady, I came, pretending haist
 In Face and countenance, told them I was sent
 For things, birth' Prince forgot about the sceane,
 Which, both my credit made them to beleeeve,
 And *Nero*, newly whispered me before.
 Thus did I passe the gates, the danger Lady
 I have not yet escap'd.

Poppe. What danger meane you ?

Nim. The danger of his anger, when he knowes
 How I thus shrunk away, for there stood knaves
 That put downe in their Tables all that stir'd,
 And markt in each their cheerefullnesse or sadnesse.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Poppe. I warrant Ile excuse you : But I pray,
Let's be a little better for your sight ;
How did our Princely husband act *Orestes* ?
Did he not with againe his Mother living ?
Her death would adde great life unto his part :
But come I pray, the story of your sight.

Nim. O do not drive me to those hatefull paines ;
Lady, I was too much in seeing vext,
Let it not be redoubled with the telling ;
I now am well, and heare, my cares set free ;
O be mercifull, doe not bring me backe
Vnto my prison, at least free your selfe,
It will not passe away, but stay the time ;
Wracke out the houres in length ; O give me leaue,
As one that wearied with the toyle at Sea,
And now on wished shore hath firm'd his foote ;
x He lookes about, and glads his thoughts and eyes,
With sight oth' green cloath'd ground, & leavy trees,
Of flowers that begge more then the looking on,
And likes these other waters narrow shores ;
So let me lay my wearinesse in these armes,
Nothing but kisses to this mouth discourse,
My thought be compass in those circ'd Eyes ;
Eyes on no object looke, but on these Cheekes ;
Be blest my hands with touch of those round brests,
Whiter and softer then the downe of Swans.
Let me of thee, and of thy beanties glory,
And endlesse tell, but never wearying story.

Exeunt

Enter Nero, Epaphroditus, Neophilus.

Nero. Come Sirs, I faith, how did you like my acting ?
What ? wast not as you lookt for ?

Epaph. Yes my Lord, and much beyond.

Nero. Did I not doe it to the life ?

Epaph. The very doing never was so lively,
As now this counterfeiting.

Nero. And when I came,
Toth' point of *Agrippa, Clisemnestras* death,
Did it not move the feeling auditory ?

Epaph.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Epaph. They had bin stones, whom that could not have moved

Nero. Did not my voice hold out well to the end?

And seru'd me afterwards afresh to sing with.

Neoph. We know *Apollo* cannot match your voice.

Epaph. By *Ioue*, I thinke you are the God himselfe,
Come from above, to shew your hidden arts;
And fill us men with wonder of your skill.

Nero. Nay faith speake truly, doe not flatter me;
I know you need not: flattery's but where
Desert is meane.

Epaph. I swear by thee O *Caesar*;
Then whom no power of Heaven I honour more,
No mortall voice can passe, or equall thine.

Nero. They tell of *Orpheus*, when he took his Lute
And mov'd the Noble Ivory with his touch:

Hebrus stood still, *Pangea* bow'd his head,

Ossa then first shooke off his snow, and came

To listen to the movings of his song;

The gentle *Poplar*, tooke the *Oake* along,

And call'd the *Pyne* downe, from his Mountain seate;

The *Virginie Bay*, although the Arts she hates

O'h' *Delphicke* God, was with his voice overcome,

He his twice-lost *Euридиς* bewailes,

And *Proserpines* vaine gifts, and makes the shores

And hollo w caves of Forrests now untreed;

Beare his griefe company, and all things teacheth

His lost loves name; Then water, ayre, and ground,

Euридиς, *Euридиς*, retound.

These are bold tales, of which the *Greeks* have store;

But if he could from Hell once more returne,

And would compare his hand and voice with mine,

I, though himselfe were judge, he then should see,

How much the *Latine* stains the *Thracian* lyre,

I oft have walkt by *Tyber*s flowing bankes,

And heard the *Swan* sing her owne Epitaph,

When she heard me, she held her peace and died.

Let others raise from earthly things their praise,

Heaven hath stood still to heare my happy ayres

And

The Tragedie of Nero.

And ceaſt th' eternall Muſicke of the *Sphaeres*,
To marke my voyce, and mend their tunes by mine.

Neoph. O divine voice I

Epaph. Happy are they that heare it.

Enter Tigellinus to them.

Nero. But here comes *Tigellinus*, come, thy bill,
Are there ſo many? I ſee I have enemies.

Epaph. Have you put *Caius* in, I ſaw him frowne.

Neoph. And in the miſt o'th *Emperors* action,
Gallus laught out, and as I thinke in ſcorne.

Nero. *Veſpaſian* too aſleepe; was he ſo drowſie?
Well, he ſhall ſleepe the Iron ſleepe of death
And did *Thraſea* looke ſo ſowrely on us?

Tigel. He never ſmild my Lord, nor would vouchſafe
With one applaunt to grace your action.

Nero. Our action needed not be grac'd by him,
Hee's our old enemy, and ſtill Malignes us;
'Twill have an end, nay it ſhall have an end.

Why, I have bin too pittifull, too remiſſe,
My eaſineſſe is laught at, and contemn'd,
But I will change it; Not as heretefore,
By ſingling out them, one by one to death,
Each common man can ſuch revenges have;
A Princes anger muſt lay deſolate
Cities, Kingdomes conſume, Roote up mankind.
O could I live to ſee the generall end,
Behold the world enwrap't in funerall flame,
When as the *Sun* ſhall lend his beames to burne
What he before brought forth, and water ſerve,
Not to extinguiſh, but to nurſe the fire:
Then, like the *Salamander*, bathing me
In the laſt Aſhes of all mortall things
Let me give up this breath; *Priam* was happie,
Happy indeed, he ſaw his *Troy* burnt,
And *Ilium* ly on heapes; Whiſt thy pure ſtreames,
(Divine *Scamander*) did run *Phrygian* blood
And heard the pleaſant cries of *Troian Mothers*.
Could I ſee *Rome* ſo!

Tigel.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Tigel Your Maieſtie may eaſily,

Without this trouble to your ſacred mind.

Nero. What may I eaſily doe? kill thee, or him,

How may I rid you all? where is the man

That will all others end, and laſt himſelfe?

O that I had thy Thunder in my hand,

Thou idle Rover, he not ſhoote at trees,

And ſpend in woods my unregarded vengeance,

He ſhiver them downe upon their guiltie rooſes,

And fill the ſtreets with bloody burialls.

But 'tis not Heaven can give me what I ſeek;

To you, you hated kingdomes of the night,

You ſevere powers, that not like thoſe above,

Will with faire words, or childrens cryes be wonne.

That have a ſtile beyond that Heaven is proud of,

Deriving not from ~~but~~ a makers Name,

But in deſtruction power, and terror ſhew:

To you I flye for ſuccour: you, whoſe dwellings

For torments are bely'de, muſt give me eaſe;

Furies lend me your fires, no they are here,

They muſt be other fires; materiall brands

That muſt the burning of my heate allay;

I bring to you no rude unpractiz'd hands,

Already doe they reeke with mothers blood:

Tuſh, that's but innocent, to what now I meane,

Alaſſe what evill could theſe yeeres commit,

The world in this ſhall ſee my ſetled wit.

Exeunt.

Enter Seneca, Petronius.

Seneca. *Petronius*, you were at the Theater.

Petron. *Seneca* I was, and ſaw your Kingly Pupill

In Minitre's habit, ſtand before the Iudges,

Bowing thoſe hands, which the worlds Scepter hold,

And with great awe and reverence beſeeching

Indifferent hearing, and an equall doome:

Then *Caſar* doubting firſt to be ore-borne,

And ſo he joyn'd himſelfe to th'other ſingers,

And ſtraightly all other Lawes oth' Stage obſerv'd,

As not (though weary) to ſit downe, not ſpit,

E

Not

The Tragedie of Nero.

Not wipe his sweat off, but with what he wore;
Meane time how would he eye his adversaries,
How he would seeke t^e have all they did disgrac^t,
Traduce them privily, openly raile at them:
And them he could not conquer so, he would
Corrupt with money, to doe worse then he.
This was his singing part, his acting now.

Senec. Nay, even end here, for I have heard enough,
I'de have a Fidler heard him, let me not
See him a Player, nor the fearefull voyce
Of *Romes* great Monarch, now command in Iest
Our Prince be *Agamemnon* in a Play.

Petron. Why *Seneca*? 'Tis better in a Play
Be *Agamemnon*, then himsele indeed;
How oft, with danger of the field beset,
Or with home-mutinyes, would he unbee
Himsele, or, over cruell altars weeping,
Wish, that with putting off a vizard, hee
Might his true inward sorrow lay aside:
* The shewes of things are better then themselves:
How doth it stirre this ayery part of us,
To heare our Poets tell imagin'd fights,
And the strange blowes, that fained courage gives,
When I'd *Achilles* heare upon the Stage
Speake Honour, and the greatnesse of his Soule;
Me thinkes I too, could on a *Phrygian* Speare
Runne boldly, and make tales for after times;
But when we come to act it in the deed,
Death ma^r res this bravery, and the ugly feares
Of th'other world, sit on the proudest browe,
And boasting valour loose th his red cheeke.

A Roman to them.

Rom. Fire, fire, helpe, vve burne.

2 *Rom.* Fire, water, fire helpe fire.

Senec. Fire, where?

Petron. Where? what fire?

Rom. O round about, here, there, on every side.
The girdling flame, doth with unkind embraces

Compass

The Tragicke of Nero.

Compass the Citie.

Petro. How came this fire, by vvhom?

Senec. Wast chance, or purpose?

Petro. Why is't not quencht?

Rom. Alas there are a many there with weapons,
And whether it be for pray, or by command,
They hinder: nay, they throw on fire-brands.

Enter Antonius to them.

Anton. The fire encreaseth, and will not be staid,
But like a streame that tumbling from a hill,
Orewhelms the fields, orewhelms the hopefull toile
Och' husbandman, and headlong beares the woods;
The unvvetting Sheeheard on a Rocke asarre,
Amazed, heares the fearefull noyse; so here,
Danger and Terror strive which shall exceed,
Some cry, and yet are well, some are kild silent,
Some kindly runne to helpe their neighbours house,
The vvhist their own's a fire: some save their goods,
And leave their dearer pledges in the flame;
One takes his little sonnes with trembling hands,
Tother his house-gods saves, which could not him,
All bann the doore, and with vvishes kill
Their absent murderer.

Petro. What are the *Gauls* return'd?

Doth *Brennus* brandish fire-brands once againe.

Senec. What can Heaven nowv unto our sufferings adde?

Enter Another Romane to them.

Rom. O all goes dovvne, *Rome* falleth from the Roofe,
The vvind's aloft, the conquering flame turnes all
Into it selfe; Nor doe the gods escape,
Pleiades burns, *Iupiter*, *Saturne* burnes.
The Altar nowv is made a sacrifice:
And *Vesta* mournes, to see her Virgine fires
Mingle with prophane ashes.

Senec. Heaven, hast thou set this end, to *Roman* greatnesse?
Were the Worlds spoyles, for this, to *Rome* divided,
To make but our fires bigger?
You gods, vvwhose anger made us great, grant yet

The Tragedie of Nero.

Some change in misery ; We begge not now,
To have our Confull tread on *Asian* Kings,
Or spurne the quiverned *Susa* at their feete ;
This, we have had before ; we beg to live,
At least not thus to die ; Let *Canons* come,
Let *Alline* waters turne againe to blood.
To these will any miseries be light.

Petro. Why with false *Auguries* have we bin deceiued ?
Why was our Empire told us, should endure
With Sunne, and Moone, in time ; in brightnesse passe them,
And that our end should be oth' world, and it.
What, can Celestiall Godheads double too ?

Senec. O *Rome*, they enny late,
But now, the pittie of the world thee gets,
The men of *Cholcas* at thy sufferings grieve,
The shaggy dweller in the *Scythian* Rocks ;
The most condemned to perpetuall Snowe,
That never wept at kindreds burials,
Suffers with thee, and feeles his heart to soften.
O should the *Parthians* heare these miseries,
He would, (his low and native hate apart)
Sit downe with us and lend an Enemies teare,
To grace the funerall fires of ending *Rome*.

Exeunt

*Soft Musicke, Enter Nero alone alone with
a Timbrell.*

I, now my *Troy* lookes beaurious in her flames,
The *Tjrrhene* Seas are bright with *Roman* fires,
Whilest the amazed *Marriner* astare,
Gazing on th' unknowne light, wonders what starre
Heaven hath begot, to ease the aged Moone.
When *Pirrhus*, stryding ore the cynders ft od
On ground, where *Troy* late was ; and with his Eye
Measur'd the height of what he had throwne downe.
A Citie, great in people, and in power :
Walles built with hands of Gods ; He now forgive
The ten yeeres length, and thinkes his wounds well heal'd.
Bath'd in the blood of *Priams* fiftie sonnes.
Yet am not I appeard, I must see more.

Then

The Tragedie of Nero.

Then Towers, and Collums tumble to the ground ;
'Twas not the high built walles, and guiltlesse stones
That *Nero* did provoke ; Themselves must be the wood
To feed this fire, or quench it with their blood.

Enter a Woman with a burnt Child.

Wom. O my deare Infant, O my Child, my Child ;
Vnhappy comfort of my nine moneths paines ;
And did I beare thee onely for the fire,
Was I to that end made a Mother ?

Nero. I now begins the sceane that I would have.

Enter a Man, bearing another dead.

Man. O Father, speake yet ; no, the mercilesse blowe
Hath all bereft speech, motion, sense, and life.

Wom. O beauteous innocence, whitenesse ill blackt,
How to be made a coale couldst thou deserve ?

Man. O reverend wrinkles, well becoming palenesse,
Why hath death now lifes colours given thee,
And mockes thee with the beauties of fresh youth ?

Wom. Why wert thou given me, to be tane away
So soone, or could not heaven tell how to punish
But first by blessing me ?

Man. Why were thy yeeres lengthened so long,
To be cut off vntimely ?

Nero. Play on, play on, and fill the golden skies
With cries and pitie ; with your blood ; Mens eyes.

Wom. Where are thy flattering smiles, thy pretty kisses,
And armes, that vvont to writhe about my necke ?

Man. Where are thy Counsels, where thy good example ?
And that kind roughnesse of a Fathers anger ?

Wom. Whom have I now to leane my old age on ?

Man. Who shall I now have to set right my youth, *Within,*
Gods if ye be not fled from Heaven, helpe us.

Nero. I like this Musicke vvell ; they like not mine :
Nowv in the teares of all men, let me sing,
And make it doubtfull to the Gods above ;
Whether the earth be pleas'd, or doe complaine.

Cantat.

Man. But, may the man, that all this blood hath shed,
Never bequeath to th' earth, an old gray head ;

The Tragedie of Nero.

Let him untimely be cut off before,
And leave a curse like this all wounds and gore.
Be there no friends at hand, no standers by,
In love, or pittie moud, to close that eye.
O let him dye the vvish and hate of all;
And not a teare to grace his Funerall.

Wom. Heaven, you will heare (that which the world doth
The prayers of misery, and soules forlorne : *Exeunt.*
(scorne,)

Your anger waxeth by delaying stronger,
O now for mercy be despis'd no longer.
Let him that makes so many Mothers childlesse,
Make his unhappy, in her fruitfulnessse.
Let him no issue leave to beare his name,
Or sonne to right a fathers wronged fame,
Our flames to quit; be righteous in your yre,
And when he dies, let him want funerall fire.

Nero. Let heaven doe vvhat it vvill, this have I done
Already: doe you feele my furies vvaight?
Rome is become a grave of her late greatnesse;
Her clouds of smoke haue tane avay the day,
Her flames the night
Novv unbelceving eyes what crave you more?

Enter Neophilus to him.

Neoph. O save your selfe (my Lord) your Pallace burnes.

Nero. My Pallace? how? vvhat traiterous hand?

Enter Tigellinus to them.

Tigell. O flie my Lord, and save your selfe betimes,
The Winde doth beate the fire upon your house,
The eating flame devoures your double gates,
Your pillars fall, your golden roofes doe melt,
Your antique Tables, and Greeke Imagery
The fire besets, and the smoake you see,
Doth choake my speech, O flie, and save your life.

Nero. Heaven thou dost striue I see for Victory, *Exeunt.*

Enter Nymphidius solus.

Nimp. See how Fates worke unto their purpos'd end;
And without all selfe-Industry will raise,
Whom they determine to make great and happy;

Nero.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Nero throwves dovvn himsele, I stirre him not,
He runnes unto destruction, studies vvayes
To compasse danger, and attaine the hate
Of all; Bee his owne wishes on his head:
Nor *Rome* with fire, more then revenges burne:
Let me stand still, or lye, or sleepe, I rise.
Poppea some new favour vvill seeke out
My wakings to salute, I cannot stirre,
But messengers of new preferment meete me:
Novv, she hath made me Captaine of the Guard,
So well I beare me in these night Alarmes,
That she imagin'd I was made for Armes;
I novv command the Souldiour, he the Citie,
If any chance doe turne the Prince aside,
(As many hatreds, mischiefes threaten him,)
Ours is his Wife, his seate and throne is ours,
He's next in right that hath the strongest povvers.

Exit.

[Enter Scenimus, Melichius.]

Sceni. O *Troy*, and O yee soules of our forefathers,
Which in your countries fires were offered up,
How neere your Nephewes, to your fortunes come:
Yet they vv ere *Grecian* hands began your flame;
But that our Temples, and our houles smoake,
Our Marble buildings turne to be our Tombes,
Burnt bones, and spurn'd at Coarces fill the streetes,
Not *Pirrus*, nor thou *Hannibal*, art Author,
Sad *Rome* is ruin'd by a *Romane* hand.
But if to *Nero's* end, this only vvay
Heavens Iustice hath chose out, and peoples love
Could not but by this feebling ills be mov'd;
We doe not then at all complaine our harmes,
On this condition please us, let us die,
And cloy the *Parthian* with revenge and pittie.

Melic. My Master hath seal'd up his Testament,
Those bond-men which heliketh best set free,
Given money, and more liberally then hee us'd e:
And now, as if a farewell to the World
Were meant, A sumptuous banquet hath he made;

Yet

The Tragedie of Nero.

Yet not with countenance that feasters use,
But cheeres his friends the vvhilest himselfe lookes sad.

Scen. I have from fortunes Temple tane this sword,
May it be fortunate, and now at least
Since it could not prevent, punish the Evill;
To *Rome* it had bin better done before,
But though lesse helping now, they'le praise it more.
Great Sovereigne of all mortall actions
Whom only vvretched men, and poets blame,
Speed thou the weapon, which I have from thee;
*I was not amidst thy Temple monuments
In vaine repos'd, somewhat I know't hath done:
O vvith new honours let it be layd up:
Strike boldly arme, so many poverfull prayers
Of dead and living hover over thee.

Melich. And though sometimes, with talke impertinent,
And idle fancies, he vvouldaine a mirth;
Yet is it easie scene, somewhat is here
The vvhich, he dares not let his face make shew of.

Scenin. Long vvant of Lesse hath made it dull and blunt:
See *Melichus*, this vvweapon's better edg'd.

Melich. Sharpening of svvords, vvhen must vve then have
Or meanes my Master, *Cato*-like, to exempt (blowves,
Himselfe from pover of Fates, and cloy'd vvith life,
Give the gods backe their unregarded gift,
But he hath neither *Cato's* mind, nor cause;
A man given ore to pleasures, and soft ease:
Which makes me still to doubt, how in affaires
Of Princes he dares meddle, or desires?

Scenin. We shall have blowves on both sides, *Melichus*;
Provide me store of cloathes to bind up vvounds;
What an't bee heart for heart, Death is the vvorst;
The gods sure keepe it, hide from us that live,
How svvete death is, because vve should goe on
And be their bailes: There are about the house
Some stones that vvill stainch blood, see them set up:
This World I see hath no felicity,
He trie the other.

Melichus.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Albuc. *Nero's* life is soft,
The sword's prepar'd against anothers breast,
The helpe for his : it can be no private foe,
For then 'twere best to make it knowne, and call
His troupes of bond, and freed men to his ayd :
Besides his Counsellors, *Seneca*,
And *Lucan*, are no Managers of quarrells.

Severin. Me thinkes, I see him struggling on the ground
Heare his unmanly outcries, and lost prayers
Made to the gods, which turne their heads away.
Nero, this day must end the worlds desires,
And headlong send thee, to unquenched fires.

exit.

Melich. Why doe I further idly stand debating,
My proofes are but too many, and too pregnant,
And Princes eares still to suspicions open :
Who ever being but accus'd, was quit ;
For States are wise, and cut of ill's that may be ;
Meane men must die, that t'other may sleepe sound,
Chiefely, that rule, whose weakenes apt to feares,
And bad deserts of all men, makes them know
There's none ; but is in heart, what hee's accus'd.

Exit.

Finis Actus Tertij.

Actus Quartus.

Enter *Nero*, *Poppa*, *Nimphidius*, *Tigellinus*,
Neophytus, and *Epaphroditus*.

Nero. **T**His kisse sweete Love, Ile force from thee, and this,
And of such spoiles, and victories be prouder,
Then if I had the fierce *Pannonian*,
Or Gray-cyd *German* ten times overcome.
Let *Indus* goe, and fight at th'end oth' world,
And conquer from the wild inhabitants
Their cold, and povertie ; whilst *Nero* here,
Makes other warres, warres here the conquered gaines,

F

Where-

The Tragedie of Nero.

VVhere to overcome, is to be prisoner.
O willingly, I giue my freedome up,
And put on my owne chaines;
And am in loue with my captiuitie;
Such *Venus* is, when on the sandy shore
Of *Xanthus* or on *Idas* pleasant Greene
She leads the dance; Her, the Nymphs all are we,
And smiling graces doe accompany.
If *Bacchus* could his stragling Minion
Grace, with a glorious wreath of shining Starres;
Why should not heaven my *Poppea* Crowne?
The Northern teeme shall moue into a round:
New constellations rise, to honour thee;
The earth shall wooe thy favours, and the Sea
Lay his rich shells, and treasure at thy feete.
For thee, *Hidaspius* shall throw up his gold,
Panchaea breath the rich delightfull smells,
The *Seres*, and the feather'd man of *Inde*
Shall their fine Arts, and curious labours bring:
And where the Sun's not knowne, *Poppeas* name
Shal midst their feasts, and barbarous pompe be sung.
Popp. I, now I am worthy to be Queen oth' world,
Fairer then *Venus*, or the *Bacchus* loue:
But youle anon unto you cut-boy, *Sporus*,
Your new made vvoman; to whom, now I heare
You are wedded to.

Nero. I wedded?

Poppea. I, you wedded:
Did you not heare the words oth' *Auspices*,
Was not the boy in bride-like garments drest,
Marriage bookes seald, as 'twere for issue, to
Be had betwene you, solemne feasts prepar'd,
VVhile all the Court, with God-giue you *loy*, sounds.
It had bin good *Domitian* your father
Had nere had other VVife.

Nero. You frowvard foole, y'are still so bitter, whose that?

Enter Melichus to them.

Nymph. One that it seemes, my Lord doth come in hast.

Nero.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Nero. Yet in his face hee sends his tale before him,
Bad newes thou tellest.

Melie. 'Tis bad I tell, but good that I can tell it,
Therefore your Majestie will pardon me,
If I offend your eares to save your life.

Nero. Why, is my life indanger'd?
How ends this circumstance? thou wrackst my thoughts.

Melie. My Lord, your life is conspir'd against,

Nero. By whom?

Melie. I must be of the world excus'd in this,
If the great dutie to your Majestie
Makes me all other lesser to neglect.

Nero. Th'art a tedious fellow, speake, by whom?

Melie. By my Master?

Nero. Who's thy Master?

Meli. Sceninus.

Poppe. Sceninus, why should he conspire?
Vnlesse he thinke, that likenesse in conditions
May make him too, worthy oth' Empire thought.

Nero. Who are else in it?
I thinke *Natalis, Subius, Flavius,*
Lucan, Seneca, and *Lucius Piso,*
Asper, and *Quintilianns.*

Nero. Had one.
Thou'lt reckon all *Rome* anon, and so thou maist,
Th'are villaines all, Ile not trust one of them;
O that the *Romanes* had but all one necke.

Poppe. *Pisos* lye creeping into mens affections,
And popular arts, have given long cause of doubt,
And th'others late obseru'd discontents
Risen from misinterpreted disgraces,
May make us credit this relation.

Nero. Where are they? come they not upon us yet?
See the Guard doubled, see the Gates shut up.
Why, they'le surprise us in our Court anon.

Meli. Not so my Lord, they are at *Pisos* house,
And thinke themselves yet safe, and undescri'd.

Nero. Lets thither then.

The Tragedie of Nero.

And take them in this false security ;

Tigell. I were better first publish them traitors.

Nymph. That were to make them so,
And force them all upon their enemies ;
Now without stirre, or hazard theyle be tane.
And boldly tryall dare, and law demand ;
Besides, this accusation may be forg'd,
By malice or mistaking,

Poppea. What likes you, doe *Nymphidius*, out of hand ;
Two wayes distract, when either would prevaile ;
If they suspecting but this fellowes absence,
Should try the City, and attempt their friends,
How dangerous might *Pisces* favour be.

Nymph. I to himselfe would make the matter cleare,
Which now upon one servants credit stands :
The Cities favour keepes within the bonds
Of profit, they'le love none, so hurt themselves ;
Honour, and friendship they beare others name,
Themselves doe neither feele, nor know the same ;
To put them yet (though needlesse) in some feare,
Weele keepe their streets with armed companies :
Then if they stirre, they see their wives, and houses
Prepared a prey to th'greedy Souldier.

Poppea. Let us be quicke then, you to *Pisces* house,
While I, and *Tigellinus* further sift
This fellowes knowledge.

Ex. omnes Prater Nero.

Nero. Looke to the gates, and walles oth' City, looke,
The riuer be well kept, have watches set
In euery passage, and in every way.
But who shall watch these watches, what if they
Begin to play the traitors first ? O where shall I
Seeke faith, or them that I may wisely trust ?
The Citie favours the conspirators,
The Senate, in disgrace, and feare hath liu'd ;
The Campe, why most are souldiers that be named ;
Besides, he knowes not all ; and like a foole
I interrupted him, else had he named
Those that stood by me ; O securitie,

Which

The Tragedie of Nero.

Which we so much seeke after, yet art still
To Court a stranger, and dost rather choose,
The smoaky reedes, and sedge cottages,
Then the proud rooves, and wanton cost of Kings.
O sweete despised joyes of pouerty,
A happines unknowne unto the gods :
Would I had rather in poore *Galij* bin,
Or *Ulnbra*, a ragged Magistrate,
Sate as a iudge of measures, and of corne,
Then the adored Monarch of the world.
Mother, thou didst deservedly in this,
That from a private, and sure state, didst raise
My fortunes, to this slippery hill of greatnesse ;
Where I can neither stand, nor fall with life. *Exit.*

Enter, Piso, Lucan, Scenimus, Flavinus.

Flavi. But since we are discover'd, what remains?
But put our lives upon our hands, these swords
Shall try us traitors or true Citizens.

Sceni. And what should make this hazard doubt successe,
Stout men are oft with sudden onsets daunted,
What shall this Stage-player be ?

Luc. It is not now,
Augustus gravitie, nor *Tiberius* craft,
But *Tigellinus*, and *Crisogernus*
Eunuches, and women that we goe against.

Scen. This for thy own sake, this for ours we beg,
That thou wilt suffer him to be overcome ;
Why shouldst thou keepe so many vowed swords
From such a hated throate?

Flavi. Or we shall feare,
To trust unto the gods so good a cause ?

Lucan. By this we may our selves Heavens favour promise,
Because all noblenesse, and worth on earth
We see's on our side ; Here the *Fabij's* sonne,
Here the *Corninii* are, and take that part ;
Their noble Fathers would ; if now they lin'd ;
There's not a soule that claimes Nobilitie
Either by his, or his forefathers merit.

The Tragedie of Nero.

But is with us ; with us the gallant youth
VVhom passed dangers or hot blood makes bold :
Staid men suspect their wisedome, or their faith,
To vvhom our counsels we have not reueald.
And while (our party seeking to disgrace)
They traitors call us, Each man treason praiseth,
And hateth faith, when *Piso* is a traitor.

Sceni. And at adventure ? what by floutnesse can
Besall us vvorse, then will by cowardise ?
If both the people, and the souldier fail'd us,
Yet shall we die at least worthy ourselues,
VVorthy our ancestors : O *Piso* thinke,
Thinke on that day, when in the *Parthian* fields
Thou cryedst to th' flying Legions to turne,
And look t Death in the face ; he vv as not grim,
But faire and lonely, when he came in armes.
O why, there dy'd we not on *Syrian* swords ?
VVere we referu'd to prisons, and to chaines.
Behold the Galley-asses in every streete,
And even now they come to clap on yrons ;
Must *Piso's* head be shewed upon a pole ?
Those members torne ; rather then *Roman*-like,
And *Piso*-like, vvith vvapons in our hands
Fighting in throng of enemies to die :
And that it shall not be a civill vvarre
Nero prevents, vv whose crueltie hath left
Fevv Citizens, vve are not Romans novv,
But Moores, and Ievves, and v most Spaniards,
And *Assians* refuge that doe fill the Citie.

Piso. Part of us are already tak'n, the rest
Amaz'd, and seeking holes ; Our hidden ends
You see layd open, Court, and City arm'd,
And for feare joyning to the part they feare.
Why should vve move desperate and hopelesse armes
And vainely spill that noble blood that should
Christall *Rubies*, and the *Median* fields,
Not *Tiber* colour : And the more you shovv by
Your loves, and readinesse to loose your lives,

The

The Tragedie of Nero.

The lother I am to adventure them.
Yet am I proud, you would have for me dy'd,
But live, and keepe your selves to worthier ends;
No Mother but my owne shall weepe my death,
Nor will I make by overthrowing us,
Heaven guiltie of more faults, yet from the hopes,
Your owne good wishes, rather then the thing
Doe make you see, this comfort I receive
Of death unforc't, O friends, I would not die
When I can live no longer; 'Tis my glory,
That free, and willing I give up this breath,
Leaving such courages as yours untri'd,
But to be long in talke of dying, would
Shew a relenting, and a doubtfull mind:
By this you shall my quiet thoughts intend;
I b'lame nor Earth, nor Heaven for my end.

He ayes.

Lucan. O that this noble courage had bin shewne,
Rather on enemies breasts, then on thy owne.

Sceni. But sacred, and inviolate be thy will,
And let it lead, and teach us;
This sword I could more willingly have thrust
Through *Nero's* breast; That, fortune deni'd me,
It now shall through *Sceniums*.

Enter Tigellinus solus.

What multitudes of villaines are here gotten
In a conspiracie; which *Hydra* like,
Still in the cutting off, increaseth more.
The more we take, the more are still appeachr,
And every man brings in new company.
I wonder what we shall doe with them all,
The prisons cannot hold more then they have,
The Iayles are full, the holes with Gallants stinke,
Strawe and gold lace together live I thinke:
'Twere best even shut the Gates oth' City up,
And make it all one Iayle; for, this I am sure,
There's not an honest man within the walles:
And though the guilty doth exceed the free;
Yet through a base, and facall cowardise,

They.

The Tragedie of Nero.

They all assist, in taking one another,
And by their ovvne hands are to prison led.
There's no condition, nor degree of men,
But here are met; Men of the sword, and gowne,
Plebeians, Senators, and women too,
Ladies that might have slaine him with their eye,
Would use their hands, *Philosophers,*
And Politicians; Politicians?
Their plot vvas laid too short; Poets would now
Not onely write, but be the Arguments
Of Tragedies: the Emperors much pleas'd:
But some have named *Seneca*, and I
Will have *Petronius*, one promise of pardon,
Or feare of torture, will accusers find.

exit.

Enter Nymphidius, Lucan, Senninus, with a guard.

Nymph. Though *Piso*s suddennesse and guilty hand
Prevented hath the death he should have had;
Yet you abide, it must.

Lucan. O may the earth lye lightly on his Coarse,
Sprinkle his ashes with your flowers and teares,
The loue and dainties of mankind is gone.

Seni. What only now we can, wee'le follow thee
That way thou lead'st, and waite on thee in death,
Which vve had done, had not these hindred us.

Nymph. Nay, other ends your grievous crimes awaite,
Ends which the law and your deserts exact.

Seni. What have we deserved?

Nymph. That punishment that traitors unto Princes,
And enemies unto the State they live in merit.

Senin. If by the State this government you meane,
I justly am an enemy unto it.

That's but to *Nero*, you, and *Tigellius*:
That glorious World, that even beguiles the wise,
Being lookt into, includes but three or foure
Corrupted men, which were they all remou'd,
I would for the common State much better be.

Nymph.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Nymph. Why, what can you ith government mislike?
Vnlesse it grieve you that the World's in peace,
Or that our armies Conquer without blood.
Hath not his power with forraine visitations,
And strangers honour more acknowledg'd bin,
Then any was afore him? Hath not he
Dispos'd of frontier Kingdomes, with successe,
Given away Crownes, whom hee set up, prevailing?
The rivall seate of the *Arsacide*,
That thought their brightnesse equall unto ours,
It's crown'd by him, by him doth raigne?
If we have any warre, it's beyond *Rheme*,
And *Enphrates*, and such whose different chances
Have rather serv'd for pleasure, and discourse,
Then troubled us; At home the City hath
Increast in wealth, with building bin adorn'd;
The Arts have flourish't, and the Muses sung,
And that, his justice, and well tempered raigne,
Hath the best Iudges pleas'd, the powers divine;
Their blessing, and so long prosperity
Of th' Empire under him, enough declare.

Sceni. You freed the State from warres, abroad, but 'twas
To spoile at home more safely, and divert
The *Parthian* enmity on us, and yet,
The glory rather, and the spoiles of warre
Have wanting bin, the losse and charge wee have.
Your peace is full of cruelty, and wrong,
Lavves taught to speake to present purposes,
Wealth, and faire houses dangerous faults become,
Much blood ith' Citie, and no common deaths,
But Gentlemen, and consulary houses:
On *Cæsars* owne house looke, hath that bin free?
Hath he not shed the blood he calls divine?
Hath not that neerenes which should love beget
Alwayes on him, bin cause of hate and feare;
Vertue, and power suspected, and kept downe:
They whose great ancestors this Empire made,

G

Distruſted

The Tragedie of Nero.

Distrusted in the government thereof;
A happy state, where *Decius* is a traitor,
Narcissus true, nor onely was't unsafe
T' offend the Prince, his treed men worse were heard,
Whose wrongs with such insulting pride were heard
That even the faultie it made innocent:
If we complain'd, that was it selfe a crime,
I, though it were to *Cæsars* benefit;
Our writings pry'd into, false guiltinesse
(Thinking each taxing pointed out it selfe)
Our private whisperings listned after; nay,
Our thoughts were forced out of us, and punish't:
And had it bin in you, to have taken away
Our understanding, as you did our speech,
You would have made us thought this honest too?

Nymph. Can malice narrow eyes,
See any thing yet more it can traduce
Scen. His long continued taxes I forbear,
In which he chiefly showed him to be Prince,
His robbing Altars, sale of Holy things,
The Antique Goblets of adored rust,
And sacred gifts of Kings, and people sold:
Nor was the spoile more odious, then the use
They were employed on, spent on shame and lust
Which still have bin so endlesse in their change,
And made us know a divers servitude.
But that he hath bin suffered so long,
And prospered, as you say: for that to thee
O Heaven, I turne my selfe, and cry; No God
Hath care of us, yet have we our revenge,
As much as Earth may be reveng'd on Heaven;
Their divine honour *Nero* shall usurpe,
And prayers, and feasts, and adoration have,
As well as *Jupiter*.

Nymph. Away blaspheming tongue,
Be ever silent for thy bitternesse.

Exiunt.

Exit.

The Tragedie of Nero.

*Enter Nero, Poppæa, Tigellinus, Flavius, Neophilus,
Epaphroditus, and a young man.*

Nero. What could cause thee,
Forgetfull of my benefits, and thy oath,
To seeke my life?

Flavi. *Nero,* I hated thee;
Nor was there any of thy souldiers
More faithfull, while thou faith deseru'd'st then I,
Together did I leaue to be a subject,
And thou a Prince, *Cæsar* was now become
A player on the Stage, a Wagoner,
A burner of our houses, and of us,
A Paracide of Wife, and Mother.

(speakeſt?) X

Tigell. Villaine, doſt know where, and of whom thou
Nero. Have you but one death for him, let it be
A feeling one (*Tigellinus*) bee't
Thy charge, and let me ſee thee witty in't.

Tigell. Come ſirrah,
Wee ſee how ſtoutly you'le ſtretch out your necke.

Flavi. Would thou durſt ſtrike as ſtoutly, *Ex. Tig. & Flavi.*

Nero. And what's he there?

Epaph. One that in whispering orchard
What pitie 'twas, my Lord, that *Piſo* died.

Nero. And why waſt pitie ſirrah, *Piſo* died?

Tigell. My Lord, 'twas pitie he deſeru'd to die.

Poppæa. How much this youth, my *Otho* doth reſemble:
Otho, my firſt, my beſt love, who is now
(Under pretext of governing) exil'd
To *Lucania* honorably baniſht.

Nero. Well, if you be ſo paſſionate,
Ile make you ſpend your pitie on your Prince,
And good men, not on traitors.

Tigell. The gods forbid my Prince ſhould pitie need.
Somewhat, the ſad remembrance did me ſtirre

The Tragedie of Nero.

Oth' fraile and weake condition of our kind,
Somewhat his greatnesse; then whom yestern day,
The World but *Cesar*, could shew nothing higher;
Besides, some vertues, and some worth he had,
That might excuse my pitie, to an end
So cruell, and unripe.

Poppea. I know not how this stranger moves my mind;
His face me thinkes is not like other mens,
Nor doe they speake thus; Oh, his wordes invade
My weakened senses, and orecome my heart.

Nero. Your pittie shewes, your favour and your will
Which side you are enclin'd too, had you power,
You can but pitie, else should *Cesar* feare,
Your ill affection then shall punish be,
Take him to execution, he shall die,
That the death pities of mine enemie.

Tong. This benefit at least
Sad death shall give, to free me from the power
Of such a government; and if I die
For pittying humane chance, and *Piso*'s end,
There will be some too, that will pitie mine.

Poppe. O what a dauntlesse looke, what sparkling eyes,
Threatning in suffering; sure some Noble blood
Is hid in ragges, feare argues a base spirit:
In him what courage, and contempt of death,
And shall I suffer one I loue to die?
He shall not die: hands of this man, avay,
Nero, thou shalt not kill this guilelesse man.

Nero. He guiltlesse, strumpet?
Shee's in love with the smooth face of the boy.

*Spurns her and
Poppea falls.*

Neoph. Alas my Lord you have slaine her.

Epaph. Helpe, she dies.

Nero, Poppea, Poppea, speake, I am not angry,
I did not meane to hurt thee, speake sweete love.

Neoph. Shee's dead my Lord.

Nero. Fetch her againe, she shall not die,
He ope the Iron gates of hell,

And

The Tragedie of Nero.

And breake the imprisoned shadowes of the deepe,
And force from death this farre too worthy prey,
Shee is not dead.
The crimson red, that like the morning shone,
When from her vwindowes (all with Roses strewd)
Shee peepeth forth, forsakes not yet her checkes,
Her breath, that like a hony-suckle smelt
Twining about the prickled Eglantine,
Yet moves her lips; those quicke and piercing eyes,
That did in beautie challenge heavens eyes
Yet shine as they were vvon't: O no they doe not,
See how they growv obscure: O see, they close,
And cease to take, or give light to the World.
What starres so ere you are assur'd to grace
The firmament, (for loe the twinkling fires
Together throng, and that cleare milky space
Of stormes, and *Pbiades*, and thunder void,
Prepares your roome,) doe not with vvery aspect
Looke on your *Nero*, who in blood shall mourne
Your lucklesse fate; and many a breathing soule,
Send after you to vwait upon their Queene;
This shall begin, the rest shall follow after,
And fill the streets vvith outcries, and vvith slaughter. *Exit.*

Enter Seneca with two of his friends.

Senec. What meanes your mourning, this ungratefull sorrow?
Where are your precepts of *Philosophy*?
Where our prepared resolution,
So many yeeres fore-studied against danger?
To vvhom is *Neroes* crueltie unknowne?
Or what remained after mothers blood,
But his instructors death? Leave, leave these teares,
Death from me nothing takes, but vvhat's a burthen,
A dog to that free sparke of Heavens fire:
But that in *Seneca*, the vvich you lou'd,
Which you admir'd, doth, and shall still remaine
Secure of death, untouched of the grave.

G 3

1. Friend.

The Tragedie of Nero.

1. *Friend.* Weele not belie our teares, we waile not thee,
It is our selves, and our owne losse we grieve ;
To thee, what losse in such a change can be,
Vertue is paid her due, by death alone ;
To our owne losses doe we give these teares,
That loose thy love, thy boundlesse knowledge loose,
Loose the unpatternd sample of thy vertue,
Loose what focu'r may praise or sorrow move ;
In all these losses, yet of this we glory,
That 'tis thy happinesse that makes us sorry.

2. *Friend.* If there be any place for Ghosts of good men,
If (as we have bin long taught) great mens soules
Consume not with their bodies, thou shalt see,
(Looking from out the dwellings of the ayre)
True duties to thy memory perform'd ;
Not in the outward pompe of funerall,
But in remembrance of thy deeds, and words,
The oft recalling of thy many vertues,
The tombe that shall th' eternall relicks keepe
Of *Seneca*, shall be his hearers hearts.

Senec. Be not afraid my soule, goe cheerefully,
To thy owne Heaven, from whence it first let down,
Thou loath by this imprisoning flesh putst on,
Now lifted up, thou raviisht shalt behold
The truth of things, at which we wonder here,
And foolishly doe wrangle on beneath ;
And like a God shalt walke the spacious ayre,
And see what even to conceit's deni'd.
Great soule oth' world, that through the parts defus'd
Of this vast All, guid'st what thou dost informe ;
You blessed mindes, that from the *Sphaeres* you move,
Looke on mens actions not with idle eyes ;
And gods we goe to, Aid me in this strife,
And combate of my flesh, that ending I,
May still shew *Seneca*, and my selfe die.

Exeunt.

Enter

The Tragedie of Nero.

Enter Antonius, Enanthe.

Ant. Sure this message of the Princes,
So grievous and unlookt for, will appall
Petronius much.

Enan. Will not death any man?

Ant. It will; but him so much the more,
That having liv'd to his pleasure; shall forgoe
So delicate a life, I doe not marvell
That *Seneca*, and such sower fellowes, can
Leave that they never tasted: But when wee
That have the *Nectar* of thy kisses felt,
That drinks away the troubles of this life,
And but one banquet make of forty yeeres,
Must come to leave this: but soft, here he is.

Enter Petronius, and a Centurion.

Petro. Leave me a while, *Centurion* to my friends,
Let me my farewell take, and thou shalt see,
Neroes commandment quickly obaid in me. *Exit Centurion.*
Come let us drink, and dash the pots with wine:
Here throw your flowers; fill me a twelling bowle,
Such as *Mecenas*, or my *Lucan* dranke
On *Virgils* birth day.

Enan. What meanes (*Petronius*) this unseasonable
And causelesse mirth? Why, comes not from the Prince
This man to you a messenger of death?

Petro. Here faire *Enanthe*, whole p'umpe ruddy checke
Exceeds the grape, it makes this; here my Gyrle. *He drinketh*
And thinkst thou death, a matter of such harme,
Why, he must have this pretty dimpling chin,
And wil peck out those eyes that now so wound.

Enan. Why, is it not th'extreamest of all ill?

Petro. It is indeed the last, and end of ill;
The gods, before th'would let us tast deaths loyes,

Plac't

The Tragedie of Nero.

Plac't us i'th toyle, and sorrowes of this World,
Because vve should perceive th'amends, and thanke them,
Death, the grim knave but leads you to the doore,
Where entred once, all curious pleasures come
To meete, and vvelcome you.

A troupe of beauteous Ladies from vv hose eyes,
Love, thousand arrowes, thousand graces shootes ;
Puts foorth their faire hands to you, and invites
To their Greene arbours, and close shadowed walks,
Whence, banisht is the roughnesse of our yeeres :
Only the West Wind blowes ; I'th ever Spring,
And ever Sommer : There the laden bowes
Offer their tempting burdens to your hand,
Doubtfull your eye, or taste inviting more :
There euery man his ovvne desires enjoyes ;
Faire *Lucrece* lyes by lusty *Tarquins* side,
And vvooes him now againe to ravish her.
Nor us, (though *Romane*) *Lais* will refuse,
To *Corinth* any man may goe ; no maske,
No envious garment doth those beauties hide,
Which *Nature* made, so moving to be spide,
But in bright Christall, which doth supply all,
And vvwhite transparent vailes they are attyr'd
Through vv which the pure snow underneath doth shine ;
(Can it be snow, from vv hence such flames arise ?)

Mingled vvith that faire company, shall vve
On banks of *Violets*, and of *Hyacinths*
Of loves devising, sit, and gently sport,
And all the vv hile melodious Musique heare,
And Poets songs, that Musique farre exceed
The old *Anacreon* crownd with smiling flowers,
And amorous *Sappho*, on her Lesbian Lute
Beauties sweete Scarres, and *Cupids* godhead sing.

Anto. What, be not ravisht vvith thy fancies, doe not
Court nothing, nor make love unto our feares.

Petro. Ist nothing that I say ?

Anto. But empty vvords.

Petro.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Petro. Why, thou requir'st some instance of the eye,
Wilt thou goe with me then, and see that World?
Which either will returne thy old delights;
Or square thy appetite anew to theirs.

Anto. Nay; I had rather farre beleewe thee here,
Others ambition such discoveries seeke;
Faith, I am satisfied with the bafe delights
Of common men; A wench, a house I have,
And of my owne a garden, Ile not change
For all your walks, and Ladies, and rare fruits.

Petro. Your pleasures must of force resigne to these,
In vaine you shunne the sword, in vaine the Sea,
In vaine is *Nero* fear'd, or flattered;
Hither you must, and leave your purchas'd houses,
Your new made garden, and your blacke brovyd wife,
And of the trees thou hast so quaintly set;
Not one, but the displeasing Cypresse shall
Goe vvith thee.

Anton. Faith 'tis true, we must at length,
But yet *Petronius*, while we may, awhile
We would enjoy them, those we have, w're sure of,
When that you talke of's doubtfull, and to come.

Petro. Perhaps thou thinkst to live yet twenty yeeres,
Which may unlookt for be cut off, as mine,
If not, to endlesse time compar'd, is nothing
What you endure must ever, endure now;
Nor stay nor, to be last at table set,
Each best day of our life at first doth goe,
To them succeeds diseased age, and woe;
Now die your pleasures, and the dayes your pray
Your rimes, and loves, and jests vvill take away.
Therefore my sweet, yet thou wilt goe with me,
And not live here, to vvhat thou wouldst not see.

Enan. Would y'haue me then kill my selfe, and die,
And goe I know not to what places there?

Petro. What places dost thou feare?
Th'ill favoured lake they tell thee thou must passe,

H

And

The Tragedie of Nero.

And thy blacke frogs that croake about the brim.

Enan. O pard on Sir, though death afrights a woman;
Whose pleasures, though you timely here divine,
The paines we know, and see.

Petron. The paine is life, death rids that paine away,
Come boldly, there's no danger in this foord,
Children passe through it: If it be a paine,
You have this comfort, that you past isare.

Enan. Yet all, as well as I, are loath to die.

Petro. Iudge them by deed, you see them doe't apace.

Enan. I, but tis loathly, and against their wills.

Petro. Yet, know you not that any being dead,
Repented them, and would have liv'd againe:
They then their errours saw, and foolish prayers,
But you are blinded in the love of life,
Death is but sweete to them that doe approach it,
To me as one that taken with *Dolphick* rage,
When the divining God his breast doth fill,
He sees what others cannot standing by,
It seemes a beauteous, and a pleasant thing;
Where is my deaths Physitian?

Phys. Here my Lord.

Petro. Art ready?

Phys. I my Lord.

Petro. And I for thee:

Nero, my end shall mocke thy tyranny.

Exeunt.

Finis Actus Quarti.

Actus Quintus.

*Enter Nero, Nimphidius, Tigellinus, Neophilus,
Epaphroditus, and other attendants.*

Nero. **E** Nough is wept *Poppae*, for thy death,
Enough is bled, so many teares of others

Wailing.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Wailing their losses have wip't mine away.
Who in the common funerall of the world
Can mourne on death ?

Tigel. Besides, your Majestie this benefit
In their deserved punishment shall reape
From all attempts hereafter to be freed,
Conspiracy is now for ever dash't,
Tumult suppress't, rebellion out of heart;
In *Piso's* death, danger it selfe did die.

Nymph. *Piso* that thought to climbe by bowing downe
By giving a way to thrive, and raising others
To become great himselfe, hath now by death
Given quiet to your thoughts, and feare to theirs
That shall from treason their advancement plot;
Those dangerous heads that his ambition lean'd on,
And they by it crept up, and from their meannesse
Thought in this stirre to rise aloft, are off:
Now peace, and safety waite upon your throne;
Security hath wall'd your state about,
There is no place for feare left.

Nero. Why, I never feard them.

Nymph. That was your fault.
Your Maiestie must give us leave to blame
Your dangerous courage, and that noble soule
Too prodigall of it selfe.

Nero. A Princes mind knowes neither feare nor hope,
The beames of royall Maiestie are such,
As all eyes are with it amaz'd, and weakened,
But it with nothing; I at first contemn'd
Their weake devises, and faint enterprise:
Why, thought they against him to have prevail'd,
Whose childhood was from *Massalinus* spight
By Dragons, (that the earth gave up) preserv'd,
Such guard my cradle had; for fate had then
Pointed me out, to be what now I am.
Should all the Legions, and the Provinces
In one united, against me conspire:

The Tragedie of Nero.

I could disperse them with one angry eye.
My brow's an host of men; Come *Tigellinus*,
Let's turne this bloody banquet, *Piso* meant us,
Vnto a merry feast, wee'll drinke and challenge
Fortune; who's that *Neopholus*?

Enter a Roman.

Neoph. A Currier from beyond the Alpes my Lord.
Nero. Newes of some German Victory belike,
Or Britton overthrow.

Neoph. The Letters come from France.

Nymph. Why smiles your Majestie?

Nero. So I smile, I should be afraid ther's one
In Armes *Nymphidius*.

Nymph. What, arm'd against your Majestie?

Nero. Our Lieutenant of the Province, *Iulius Vindex*.

Tigel. Who, that giddy French-man?

Nymph. His Province is disarm'd, my Lord, he hath
No legion, not a souldier under him.

Epaph. One that by blood, and rapine would repaire
His state consum'd in vanities, and lust.

Enter another Roman.

Tigel. He would not find out three to follow him,

Amess. More neeves my Lord.

Nero. Is it of *Vindex* that thou hast to say?

Mess. *Vindex* is up, and with him France in armes,
The Noble men, and people throng to th' cause.
Money, and Armour, Cities doe conferre,
The Country doth send in provision,
Yong' men bring bodies, old men lead them forth,
Ladies doe coyne their Jewells into pay,
The sickle now is fram'd into a sword,
And drawing horses are to manage taught,
France nothing doth but vvar, and fury breath.

Nero. All this fierce talk's but *Vindex* doth rebell,
And I will hang him.

Tigel. How long came you forth after the former mess eger?

Mess. Foure dayes, but by the benefit of sea,

And

The Tragædie of Nero.

And weather, am arriv'd with him.

Neoph. How strong was *Vindex* at your coming forth?

Mess. He was esteem'd a hundred thousand.

Tigel. Men enough.

Nymph. And souldiers few enough.

Tumultuary troupes, undisciplin'd,

Vntrain'd in service, to vvas't victuals good,

But when they come to looke on warres blacke wounds,

And but a farre off see the face of death.

Nero. It fall's out for my empty coffers well,

The spoyle of such a large and goodly Province,

Enricht with trade, and long enjoyed peace.

Tigel. What order will your Maiesty have taken

For levying forces to suppress this stirre?

Nero. What order should we take? wee'l laugh and drinke,

Thinkst thou it fit my pleasures be disturb'd

VVhen any French-man list to breake his necke?

They have not heard of *Piso's* fortune yet,

Let that rare fight with them.

Nymph. VVhat order needs? your Majestie shall finde

This French heate quickly of it selfe growv cold.

Nero. Come avvay.

Nothing shall come that this nights sport shall stay.

Exit Nero.

Mamet Neophilus, Epaphroditus.

Neoph. I wonder what makes him so confident

In this revolt now growvne unto a warre,

And ensignes in the field, when in the other,

Being but a plot of a conspiracy,

He shew'd himselfe so wretchedly dismay'd?

Epaph. Faith, the right nature of a covvard to set light

Dangers that seeme farre off. *Piso* was here,

Ready to enter at the presence doore,

And dragge him out of his abused chaire,

And then he trembled: *Vindex* is in France,

And many vvoods, and fens, and hills betweene.

Neoph. 'Twas strange that *Piso* vvvas so soone suppress'd.

H 3.

Strange

The Tragedie of Nero.

Epaph. Strange, strange indeed, for had he but come up,
And taken the Court in that affright and stirre,
While unresolv'd for whom or what to doe,
Each on the other had in jealousie
(While as apaled Maiestie not yet
Had time to set the countenance) he would
Have hazarded the Royall seate.

Neoph. Nay, had it without hazard; al the Court
Had for him bin, and those disclos'd their love,
And favour in the cause, which novv to hide
And colour their good meanings ready were
To shew their forwardnesse against it most.

Epaph. But for a stranger with a naked province,
Without allies, or friends it h'state to challenge
A Prince upheld with thirty Legions
Rooted in foure discents of Ancestors,
And foureteene yeeres continuance of raigne,
Why it is —

*Enter Nero, Nymphidius, Tigellinus to them. (ex. Nero, Nymph.
Nero. Galba and Spaine, what Spaine and Galba too?*

Epaph. I pray thee *Tigellinus*, what furie's this?
What strange event, vvhath accident hath thus
Orecast your countenances?

Tigel. Downe we were set at table and began
X With sparkling bowles to chase our feares away,
And mirth and pleasure lookt out of our eyes;
When loe a breathlesse messenger comes in
And tells how *Vindex*, and the powers of France
Have *Sergius Galba* chosen Emperour,
With what applause the Legions him receive,
That *Spaine's* revolted; *Portingale* hath joya'd;
As much suspected is of *Germany*;
But *Nero*, not abiding out the end,
Orethrevv the tables, dasht against the ground
The cuppe which hee so much you know esteem'd;
Teareth his haire, and with incensed rage
Curseth false men, and gods the lookers on.

Neoph.

The Tragedy of Nero.

Nerph. His rage we savv vvas wild and desperate.

Epaph. O you unsearched wisedomes, which doe laugh,
At our security, and feares alike?
And plaine to shew our weakenesse, and your power
Make us contemne the harmes, which surest strike
When you our glories, and our pride undoe,
Our overthrow you make ridiculous too.

Exeunt.

Enter Nimphidius solus.

Slow making counsels, and the sliding yeere
Have brought mee to the long foreseene destruction
Of this mislled young man; his State is shaken,
And I will push it on; revolted France;
Nor the conjured Provinces of *Spain*,
Nor his owne guilt, shall like to me oppress him;
I to his easie yeelding feares proclaime
New German mutinies, and all the vworld
Rovving it selfe in hate of *Nero*s name;
I his distracted counsels doe disperse
With fresh despaires, I animate the Senate
And the people, to ingage them past recall
In prejudice of *Nero*, and in brieve,
Perish he must, the fates and I resolve it;
Which to effect, I presently will goe,
Proclaime a *Donasine* in *Galba*s name.

Enter Antoninus to him.

Anton. Yonders *Nimphidius* our commander, now,
I with respect must speake, and smooth my brow;
Captaine all haile.

Nimph. *Antoninus* well mer,
Your place of *Tribune* in this Anarchy.

Anton. This Anarchy my Lord, is *Nero* dead?

Nimph. This Anarchy, this yet unfiled time,
While *Galba* is unseated of the Empire
V Which *Nero* hath forsooke.

Anton. Hath *Nero* then resign'd the Empire?

Nimph. In effect he hath, for he's fled to *Egypt*.

Anton. My Lord you tell strange newes to me.

Nimph.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Nymph. But nothing strange to mee,
Who every moment knew of his despaires,
The Curriers came so fast with fresh alarmes
Of new revols, that hee unable quite
To beare his feares, which he had long conceal'd,
Is now revolted from himselfe and fled.

Anto. Thrust with reports and rumours from his scate.
My Lord you know the Campe depends on you
As you determine.

Nymph. There it lyes *Antonius*,
What should we doe, it bootes not to relie
On *Neroes* stinking fortunes, and to sit
Securely looking on, were to receive
An Emperour from Spaine; which how disgracefull
It were to us, who if wee weigh our selves
The most materiall accessions are
Of all the Romane Empire, which disgrace
To cover we must joyne ourselves betimes,
And thereby seeme to have created *Galba*;
Therefore Ile straight proclaim a *Donatius*,
Of thirty thousand sifterces a man.

Anto. I thinke so great a gift was never heard of,
Galba they say is frugally inclin'd,
Will he avow to great a gift as this?

Nymph. How ere he like of it, he must avow it,
If by our promise he be once engaged;
And since the souldiers care belongs to mee,
I will have care of them, and of their good.
Let them thanke me, if I through this occasion,
Procure for them so great a donative. *Exit Nymph.*

Anto. So you be, thank't, it skills not who prevaile,
Galba, or *Nero*, traitor to them both;
You give it out that *Neroes* fled to Egypt,
Who with the frights of your reports amaz'd,
By our device, doth lurke for better newts.
Whilest you inevitably doe betray him,
Works he all this for *Galba* then? nor so,

I have

The Tragedie of Nero.

I have long seene his climbing to the Empire
By secret practises of gracious women;
And other instruments of the late Court;
That was his love to her that me refus'd;
And now by this hee would give the Souldiers fauor,
Now is the time to quit *Poppa*'s scorne,
And his rivallity; I'e straight reveale
His trecheries, to *Galba*'s agents here.

Exit

Enter Tigellinus with the Guard.

Tigel. You see what issue things doe sort unto;
Yet may we hope not onely impanitie,
But with our fellows part oth'guilt proclaim'd.

Nero meets them.

Nero. Whither goe you, stay my friends:
'Tis *Caesar* calles you, stay my loving friends.

Tigel. We were his slaves, his footstoolles, and must crouch;
But now, with such observance to his seete,
It is his misery that calles us friends.

Nero. And moves you not the misery of a Prince?
O stay my friends, stay, hearken to the voyce
Which once ye knew.

Tigel. Hearke to the peoples cries,
Hearke to the streets, that *Galba*, *Galba* ring.

Nero. The people may forsake me without blame;
I did them wrong to make you rich, and great,
I tooke their houses to bestow on you:
Treason in them hath name of liberty,
Your fault hath no excuse, you are my fault,
And the excuse of others treacherie.

Tigel. Shall we with staying seeme his tyrannies
'Tuphold, as if we were in love with them?
We are excus'd unlesse we stay too long,
As forced Ministers, and a part of wrong.

ex. prater Nero.

Nero. O now I see the vizard from my face
So lovely, and so fearefull is fallen off
That vizard, shadow, nothing (*Majestic*)
(Which like a child acquainted with his feares,

I

But

The Tragedie of Nero.

But now men tremble at, and now contemne)
Nero forsaken is of all the world,
The world of truth; O fall soone vengeance downe:
Equall unto their falshoods, and my wrongs;
Might I accept the Chariot of the Sunne,
And like another *Phaeton* consume
In flames of all the world; a pile of Death
Worthy the state and greatnesse I have lost.
Or were I now but Lord of my owne fires,
Wherein false *Rome* yet once againe might smoake,
And perish, all unpitied of her Gods,
That all things in their last destruction might
Performe a funerall honour to their Lord.
O *Ioue* dissolve with *Cesar*, *Cesars* world;
Or you whom *Nero* rather should invoke
Blacke *Chaos*, and you fearefull shapes beneath,
That with a long, and not vaine envie have
Sought to destroy this worke of th'other Gods;
Now let your darkenes cease the spoiles of day,
And the worlds first contention end your strife.

Enter two Romans to him.

1. *Rom.* Though others bound with greater benefits
Have left your changed fortunes and doe runne
Whither new hopes doe call them, yet come we—

Nero. O welcome, come you to aduersitie,
Welcome true friends, why there is faith on earth.
Of thousand servants, friends, and followers;
Yet two are left: your countenance me thinkes
Gives comfort, and new hopes.

2. *Rom.* Doe not deceive your thoughts,
My Lord we bring no comfort, would we could;
But the last duty to performe, and best
We euer shall, a free death: o perswade,
To cut off hopes of fiercer cruelty,
And scorne, more cruell to a worthy soule.

1. *Rom.* The Senate have decreed you're punished
After the fashion of our ancestors;

Which

The Tragedie of Nero.

Which is ; your necke being locked in a forke
You must be naked whipt, and scourg'd to death:

Nero. The Senate thus decreed ? they that so oft

My vertues flattered have, and gifts of mine,

My government prefer'd to ancient times,

And challenge *Numa* to compare with me ;

Have they so horrible an end sought out ?

No, here I beare, which shall prevent such shame,

This hand shall yet from that deliver me,

And faithfull be alone unto his Lord.

Alasse how sharpe, and terrible is death ;

O must I die, must now my senses close,

For ever die, and nere returne againe,

Never more see the Sunne, nor Heaven, nor Earth ?

VVhither goe I ? what shall I be anone ;

What horrid journey wandrest thou my soule,

Vnder the Earth, in darke, dampe duskie vaults ?

Or shall I now to nothing be resolv'd ?

My feares become my hopes, O would I might.

Me thinkes I see the boyling *Phlegeton*,

And the dull poole, feared of them we feare,

The dread and terrour of the Gods themselves,

The furies arm'd with linkes, with whippes, with snakes,

And my owne furies farre more mad then they ;

My mother, and those troupes of slaughtered friends,

And now the Iudge is brought unto the throne,

That will not leane unto authoritie,

Nor favour the oppressions of the great.

1. *Rom.* These are the idle terrours of the night,
Which wise men (though they teach, doe not beleve)
To curbe our pleasures faine, and aide the weake.

2. *Rom.* Deaths wrongfull defamation, which would make
Vs shunne this happy haue of our rest,
This end of evils ; as some fearefull harme.

1. *Rom.* Shadows and fond imaginations,
Which now you see on earth ; but children feare.

2. *Rom.* Why should our faults feare punishment from them,

The Tragedie of Nero.

What doe the actions of this life concerne
The tother world, with which is no commerce?

1. *Rom.* Would Heaven and Starres, necessitie compell
Vs to doe that, which after it would punish?

2. *Rom.* Let us not after our lives end beleeeve
More then you felt before it.

Nero. If any words have made me confident,
And boldly doe, for hearing others speake
Boldly this night; But will you by example
Teach me the truth of your opinion,
And make me see that you beleeeue your selues,
Will you by dying, teach me to beare death
With courage?

1. *Rom.* No necessitie of death
Hangs ore our heads, no dangers threatens us,
Nor Senates sharpe decree, nor *Galbas* armes.

2. *Rom.* Is this the thanks then thou dost pay our loue?
Die basely as such a life deseru'd;
Reserue thy selfe to punishment, and scorne
Of *Rome*, and of thy laughing enemies.

Exeunt.

Manus Nero.

Nero. They hate me, cause I would but live, what vvas't
You lov'd kind friends, and came to see my death;
Let me endure all torture, and reproach
That Earth, or *Galbas* anger can inflict:
Yet hell, and *Rodmans* are more pitilesse.

The first Roman to him.

Rom. Though not deseru'd, yet once againe I come
To warne thee to take pittie on thy selfe;
The troupes by the Senat sent, discend the hill
And come.

Nero. To take me, and to whip me unto death:
O whither shall I flie?

Rom. Thou hast no choice.

Nero. O hither must I flie, hard is his happe,
Who from death onely must by death escape,
Where are they yet? O may I not a little
Bethinke my selfe?

Rom.

The Tragedie of Nero.

Rom. They are at hand ; hearke, thou maist heare the noise.

Nero. O *Rome* farewell, farevwell you Theaters,
Where I so oft, with popular applause
In song and action ; O they come I die. *He falls on his sword.*

Rom. So base an end all just commiseration,
Doth take away, yet what we doe novv spurne,
The morning Sunne saw fearefull to the world.

*Enter some of Galbaes friends, Antonius and others,
With Nimphidius bound.*

Gal. You both shall die together, Traitors both,
He to the common wealth, and thou to him,
And worse, to a good Prince, what, is he dead ?
Hath feare encourag'd him, and made him thus,
Prevent our punishment ; then die with him.
Fall thy aspiring at thy Masters feet. *He kills Nimphi.*

Anton. Who though he justly perisht, yet by thee
Deserv'd it not, nor ended there thy treason ;
But even thought o'th Empire, thou conceiv'st
Galbaes disgrace in receiving that
Which the sonne of *Nimphidius* could hope.

Rom. Thus great bad men above them finde a rod :
People depart, and say there is a God.

Exeunt.

F F N F S.

